University of Alberta

In the Eyes of the Beholder, Spring Flowers and Autumn Leaves

By

Lois Elizabeth Edge ©

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in special fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

Department of Anthropology

Edmonton, Alberta

Spring 2001

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Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled "In the Eyes of the Beholder, Spring Flowers and Autumn Leaves" submitted by Lois Elizabeth Edge in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis offers an extended review of, and reflection on, a series of community based research initiatives undertaken in the context of self government negotiations in the Beaufort/Delta region of the Northwest Territories. Included is an analysis of the context of indigenous knowledge, traditional knowledge research, participatory action research and the feminist philosophy of "situated knowledges" in relation to self government negotiations in the Canadian North. The impact of colonization on indigenous knowledge and communities is considered, and a review of the philosophy and vision of indigenous knowledge as voiced by indigenous educators, scholars, and Elders is offered. The option of traditional leadership and indigenous governance models as envisioned by indigenous scholars and Inuvialuit and Gwich'in Elders are considered. The research suggests that fundamental tensions between western epistemology and indigenous knowledge paradigms are only partly overcome when research programs are designed to meet the needs of actors and agencies outside of aboriginal communities.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I wish to acknowledge my children, Chris and Sylvia, who are my shining stars. It was for them that I initially entered the University of Alberta as a mature student. Little did I know that upon my return to school I would begin a journey of learning, healing and growth. Little did I know the journey would elicit a wonder and invoke a passion that would impel me to discover strength, power and beauty in words and knowledge. When I was working towards a Bachelor of Arts degree, they were attending junior and senior high school. I will always remember the moment in time looking up from the pages of a book I was reading, in front of the computer where I sat, and saw that in the years that had passed, they had each grown up. And they stood by, their faith and love and belief reflected from within their hearts and in their eyes. It was for my son and my daughter that I began to learn and heal and grow. I could do no less. It was from my son and my daughter that the wonder, passion, strength, power and beauty came. I am grateful.

I wish to acknowledge my parents, Arthur and Rita, my brother, Michael, and my sister, Joanne, who lead their lives in a good way teaching me that there are no limits, that we may each be and do whatever we set our hearts and minds to do and be.

I wish to acknowledge the support and encouragement I have received from the many Aboriginal students I have come to know and who each motivated me to degree completion. I also wish to thank the staff at Native Student Services, who provide a home away from home on campus, and to the Aboriginal community at the U of A, who offer support and encouragement to all Aboriginal students. I would also like to acknowledge Stan and Peggy Wilson, with the First Nations Education Graduate Program, for their ongoing support of Aboriginal graduate students.

I wish to acknowledge Stan Wilson, Educational Policy Studies, and Rod Wilson, Department of Anthropology, for comments and committee participation. I would also like to acknowledge L. Ouzgane, T. Bishop and K. Gunnars, with the Department of English, who encouraged me to write. I would also like to acknowledge the guidance offered to me by Mike Evans, Department of Anthropology, and in allowing me to express my vision through words.

I wish to acknowledge the Fieldworkers from the Beaufort/Delta communities and the Self Government Office staff, for sharing the power, strength and beauty of the Inuvialuit and Gwich'in people and in enriching our lives in many ways. Mahsi and Quyannini.

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Chapter 1 – Finding a Voice

Entry into the Circle Leading to A Pathway of Assumptions

"Now circles are very important symbols for many of our Native people… The circle is also the symbol of reciprocity."[1]

Our entry into the circle is the beginning of my journey – creation towards becoming and being, to instill an awareness of the collective consciousness of our ancestors today and in the future. Entry into the circle begins with the guardian's pathway of assumptions… We are all children.[2] As a child, I will take your hand and ask you to walk beside me. I will do my best to talk with you along the way to explain the things I perceive, and those things I seek to understand, so we may come to know the pathway we are walking upon together. You must realize that we walk beside each other in the spirit of recognition and mutual respect. I ask that you try to comprehend my language and I will try to speak with you in your language. There are many existing interconnected pathways, some worn soft and smooth, deep within the earth; others are not as well traveled, yet walked upon since ancient times. You have broken a new trail upon the land where we walk. I welcome you to walk beside me towards a stopping place where we will sit together sharing space in a common place. I do not seek to change you nor force you to give up something you cannot. I wish to be respectful of you. Upon completion of our journey we will return to where we began having shared with each other along the way.

Finding A Voice

And so I begin. It has been a struggle to find a voice with which to speak, an arduous journey met with barriers of confusion, apathy, anger, pain, denial, sorrow, rage, anguish, capitulation and resistance. I sought to learn and understand, to speak and share. The journey was interspersed with passages of persistence, prayer, reflection, preparation, surrender and invocation of a creative heart. All of this has been my task: to see clearly, to listen and hear, to speak in a good way, connecting mind with heart; to seek clarity, understanding, enlightenment and wisdom, to be respectful of self and others. There have also been times of sheer joy, strength, power and beauty in the struggle to attain awareness and understanding towards balance and harmony – in becoming and being, through healing, and, in acceptance.

I trust the memories of our ancestors are instilled within us, that through preparation, strengthening, healing and growth, we are led to an awareness that allows participation and comprehension through the transmission of knowledge. We each hold a gift of sharing insight with others that comes of travelling the roads of caring, sharing, honour and respect on the journey leading to strength, power and beauty.

Introduction to the Storyteller

As is customary, to demonstrate respect to you and to myself, I would like to tell you who I am and where I come from. I am who my family is. Who my family is, is who I am. We are interconnected to the land and as such, our lives and stories are a part of the land. We are Metis.

My ancestors are Metis, through patrilineal descent – English and Scottish Anglican Metis; or, through matrilineal descent - French Catholic Metis - of both indigenous First Peoples and European descent. Many of the family names are associated with the Red River Settlement throughout the 1800's. The records allow for a family genealogy going back as far as the mid-1700's.[3] Today, many of the family names are known throughout the North as our "outstanding ancestors."[4] My genealogy is deep. Paternal family names today include Edge, McLeod, Firth and Stewart, the men married women whose names were McLeod, Firth, Collins, Stewart and Shodee. Maternal paternal family names include Villebrun, Mercredi, Tourangeau, Beaulieu, and possibly, Etclure zele[5]. The men married women whose names were Villebrun, Mercredi, Beaulieu, Tourangeau, St. Cyr, Larocque, St. Germain, Lamirande, LaFournier and Vadenet.[6]

A Picture Story About Becoming

Stories begin with remembering… In 1961 we were living in the old community of *Katlo Dehe*[7] on Vale Island at the mouth of the Hay River where it empties into *Tucho*[8]. Our house is right there.

I like to stand on the driftwood piled along the shoreline. I can see across to the other side of the river where the Dene live. On warm days, they come across the river in their boats and sit outside on the steps at the Hudson's Bay store wearing baseball caps and brightly colored flowered scarves, loose dark clothes, moccasins and moccasin rubbers. On windy days I lie on top of large cracked and weathered tree trunks, worn smooth from their river journey, limbs twisted into different shapes, soaking up the warmth the wood has saved from the heat of the sun. I breathe clean fresh air, and listen to the songbirds and the water and wind.

All the snow has melted and there is mud everywhere. Dry yellow grass lies flat on the ground in the front yard. The sun is warm and the wind is blowing my hair across my face. I am making channels with a stick in the dirt, watching dirty water drain into a puddle. I can smell the ice on the river. Two ravens are talking to each other; one is sitting on the roof, the other on the telephone line. I'm in front of my house.

There is a radio in our house. I never think about where the voices inside come from. One day I ask someone. They say the voices came from people who live in other places, outside and far away from my world. There are lots of people in many, many different places all over the earth. This is very exciting news and I run home to tell my mother, who says, yes, she knows. Here, I am the only one who does not know this wonderful secret.

In the fall time, I go to St. Paul's School where I am going to learn about this other world. In the dark early mornings of wintertime I get up early in the morning. I am first to walk down the road, snow crunching under my feet. I like the ice crystals sparkling like diamonds under the light of the full moon with all the stars shining in the sky. The ice crystals grow on the trees and willows when it is cold. I look back and see a pathway of small footprints in the new snow. It is dark and quiet and there is no sound except me. Sometimes I am frightened by the willow shadows at the side of the road. My heart pounds and I walk faster, my breath coming out in puffs of warm, wet air that freezes outside my body. I feel warm and safe when I see the lights on at the school; I am almost there.

I love going to school. I love learning. School is the best place in the whole world. I learn to read about Dick and Jane. They live in a world where there is a dog named Spot and a house with a picket fence and tree in the yard, somewhere "out there." We read out loud from our books. Some of the kids have a hard time. There are spaces in between the sounds of the words. The sounds of the words get mixed up with parts of one word joining another word. The words don't make any sense when they are joined together. Some of the words are broken. Some of the words are missing. The room is quiet while we wait for the sounds to come out. The quiet is a hot stillness that roars around the room. I try to read slowly. At recess we run and laugh and play. We are not allowed to slide on the hill of snow outside the principal's window.

I believe in Jesus. I have my very own guardian angel watching over me, invisible, above and behind my shoulder. I pray for the angel to look after me while I sleep. It is so sad that all people are born with original sin. God says all men are sinners. Purgatory is a terrible place where people are condemned to float in an empty space, where there is no light or dark, only gray. Their gowns billow around them. Their faces are etched in pain and hopelessness, for all eternity. I like my rosary. To be a Catholic is to be good and grown up.

Church is a beautiful place. The sun shining through the stained glass windows makes coloured sunbeams that shine on the rows of wooden pews. When we enter the church we dip our fingers into a sponge soaked in holy water, make the sign of the cross, and tiptoe up the aisle. We genuflect at the pew, sliding along the seat, bones cracking on wood, to kneel, repeating the sign of the cross, to bow our heads in worship. At back of the Church, there are three wooden doors where we go to confession. It is a small and dark closet space. There is a little window that slides open. I cannot see who is in there but I know it is the priest. I wonder what I should confess. I could say I lied or stole that week. These are the only sins I can think of. I don't swear. We are all sinners and the Lord always forgives you if you are sorry.

It is 1965 and I'm in Grade 5 at Joseph Burr Tyrrell School in *Tthebachaghe*[9]. I will turn nine years old in the spring. Our classroom has a picture of Queen Elizabeth II who is wearing a diamond crown. There is a small union jack flag that comes from Britain and a cross of Jesus suffering on the wall at the front of the room. Each morning we recite the prayer, "Our Father," and sing along to a recording of "God Save the Queen" before class begins. There are mostly native kids in my class, from town, and from other towns all over the North. They come to stay at the "hostel," Breyant Hall, in the beginning of September and they go home at the end of June every year. We get to see them at recess and lunchtime on schooldays. My sister and I stay at the hostel for three weeks. I know there is a big room where there are rows and rows of beds. The Sister wears a white nightcap on her head when she walks up and down the aisles at night when we are supposed to be sleeping. We have to cover ourselves with little cloths, top and bottom, when we take a shower, and everyone eats in the cafeteria and plays sports.

From where I sit in my classroom, I can see the kids in Grade 5A across the hall through the open doorway at the front of the classroom. Two of my cousins are in Grade 5A, with all the non-native kids.

The school is getting ready to hold an open house and we are all working on displays for our classrooms. I walk home on the path through the bush that my brother and sister and I walk on each day, to and from school. I think about my school project. I tell my mother about our Social Studies homework assignment. My mom says, why don't you bring some pictures to show what it was like long time ago? She brings out her box full of black and white pictures to the kitchen table. Some of the pictures are water soaked from the big flood in Hay River when our house was moved by the ice and floated away. My mother helps me to make a little book of pictures taped on colored construction paper. She finds some white wrapping paper decorated with the golden, red and orange autumn leaves to make a cover for the picture book. We tied the little book we made together with a ribbon. Inside, there is a picture of her grandfather, a Hudson's Bay Company factor and employee for over thirty years, standing with a big smile on his face in front of the Hudson's Bay store in Fort Chipewyan where he worked. There is a picture of her mother, who died when my mom was seven years old, and her younger brother, who died when he was a little boy. There is a picture of her grandmother, sitting on a moose hide stretcher, scraping flesh from the hide. She is old and is wearing a scarf over her hair. It is a beautiful little book.

The next day I bring the little book to school and show it to my teacher who looks it over carefully, saying, it is very nice. I put the book on the table at the front of the classroom with all the other projects about Canada, about the Queen and the explorers and settlers and the railway and the government. All the parents will be coming to the school. I look at the other projects in the other classrooms and my project is the only one about native people. After supper, I go to school early for the open house. The classrooms and hallways are empty and quiet. I go to my room and I look at the beautiful little book and I throw it in the garbage can and cover it with crumpled white paper so no one can see.

For some time afterwards, my mother would ask me about that little book - where are my pictures, remember to bring them home. But I couldn't cause they were gone. The next year, I was moved to Grade 6A.

And so I learned about the world. Fort Smith was a government town and "garden capital" of the NWT until 1967. My sister and brother and I grew up in a quiet house where we listened to the radio. We read books, graduating from Dick and Jane, to comic books, and later to the stories of Classic Comic books, of heroes and heroines, like King Arthur and Joan of Arc. Then came the Bobbsey Twins, Nancy Drew and the Hardy Boys. After that, I began reading True Romance and True Confession magazines in my bedroom with the door closed. Later, came dozens and dozens of Harlequin Romances that I read into the middle of the night. By Grade 7, we were into the literary classics available at the local library. I learned to imagine the meanings of the words I didn't know by filling in the blanks so the words all made sense. However, the meaning of such terms as "faux paux", which I thought might sound like "fox paws", really didn't make any sense at all. When we weren't reading we were outside.

The parents of the non-native kids did not allow their children to come to my house although I was sometimes allowed to visit them at their houses. The native kids at the hostel were not allowed to leave unattended outside of school hours. Sometimes, some of the native town kids disliked me. There were several sudden violent confrontations over the years. I did not understood why. I grew up fast and felt awkward in my body.

By the time I was eleven I actively sought out my peers in the community and spent several years sitting at the local café with the other Metis town kids. We walked upon the many pathways crisscrossing the bush in and around town, sat beside the Rapids on the Slave River, or spent time driving through town, or up and down the many bush roads around and outside of town. At that time, many of us were Metis.[10] I didn't really know anything about Metis, only that we were Metis and we had many relatives in town. My mother's parents had died and we sometimes visited her elderly relatives, who were French, Cree and Chipewyan.

Now, my granny was a Scottish Gwich'in woman. My grandfather was an English man. He fought in the First World War and he had a green thumb. She and my grandfather had the largest vegetable garden in town, complete with strawberry plants and raspberry bushes. Each fall the shelves in the basement would be covered with rows and rows of jars. In early spring, I watched him plant seeds in tiny pots in his greenhouse. They grew in the sunshine into little plants he transplanted into the earth once all the snow was gone. They had the most beautiful flower garden, with flowers of all shapes and sizes, and a full wall of sweet peas in all the colours of the world at the side of the house. And my granny sewed. She sewed parkas, and mukluks, and moccasins, and mittens. She sat at the kitchen table cutting out brown paper patterns. Her table was covered in tanned and bleached moose hide; fox, beaver, wolf and coyote fur trim; velvet, stroud, duffle, and cloth. She sewed with silk embroidery thread, beads, caribou or moose hair, and, sometimes, even, fish scales. She sewed into the night, and she sewed beautiful flowers, thread by thread, bead by bead, stitching and trimming little bundles of crepe paper colored hairs, or single scales, shaping all into wonderful flowers, flowers and more flowers, until their sheer beauty took your breath away.

In 1969, we heard about Trudeau's White Paper.[11] Afterwards, we heard about the Paulette Caveat Case,[12] native political organizations,[13] and native rights. We listened daily to the testimony of the Dene during the Berger Inquiry,[14] on CBC radio. In the summer of 1975, the Dene issued a Statement of Rights insisting on the right of recognition of Dene people as a nation with the "right to self-determination as a distinct people" as people of the Fourth World.[15] At that time there were more native than non-native people living in the Northwest Territories.

Metis Studying at a Post-Secondary Institution

A study undertaken to examine the experiences of post-secondary First Nations graduates from the University of British Columbia notes "the participation of First Nations peoples in higher education is less than 20% of the rate of the general population,"[16] with the postgraduate participation being even lower.[17] Statistics concerning Aboriginal students (Indian, Metis and Inuit) are difficult if not impossible to access. Statistics Canada figures in 1991 indicate a total of 8,685 university degree holders for those reporting Aboriginal identity in Canada,[18] a figure I would suggest is far below the reality of Aboriginal student participation at the post-secondary level today. Why is it that students of native ancestry experience a difficult and arduous journey at the post-secondary level?

James (Sakej) Youngblood Henderson, Chickasaw, born to the Bear Clan of the Chickasaw Nation and Cheyenne Tribe in Oklahoma, a leading tribal philosopher, advocate and strategist, currently with the University of Saskatchewan, considers:

> "In Canadian universities and colleges, academic curricula support Eurocentric contexts. When most professors describe the "world," they describe artificial Eurocentric contexts and ignore Aboriginal worldviews, knowledge, and thought. For most Aboriginal students, the realization of their invisibility is similar to looking into a still lake and not seeing their images. They become alien in their own eyes, unable to recognize themselves in the reflections and shadows of the world. As their grandparents and parents were stripped of their wealth and dignity, this realization strips Aboriginal students of their heritage and identity. It gives them an awareness of their annihilation.
>
> At best, Canadian universities define Aboriginal heritage, identity, and thought as inferior to Eurocentric heritage, identity, and thought. Typically, however, Eurocentric thought explicitly and implicitly confirms Aboriginal inadequacy and asserts a negative image of Aboriginal heritage and identity. Tragically, before long, Aboriginal students will succumb and inwardly endorse Eurocentric thought and help to lay the foundations of the relationship of domination that will entrench their thoughts."[19]

I chose to study anthropology, considered by many indigenous people to be the "handmaiden of colonization," because the discipline offered a holistic perspective on humankind and because there was little else offered by other disciplines concerning the culture, heritage and history of Aboriginal people in Canada. The majority of indigenous scholars berate anthropology – attacking the discipline's contributions to colonization. Most abhorrent to indigenous peoples, is the digging up of bones and material remains, desecration of sacred sites and holding of sacred items. At the axis of the dispute is the supposed validity of the "scientific" theoretical foundations of the discipline and self-relegated claim to "discover," interpret, and represent and indigenous people's knowledge. The textualization of indigenous people's knowledge is also viewed as reprehensible. The static nature of written text continues to transmit the attitudes and beliefs of the European colonizers who perceived the knowledge and ways of indigenous peoples as being hierarchically inferior to that of the western European Christian intellectual tradition. Henderson notes, "by rescuing Indigenous peoples of specific academic observation, Eurocentric anthropology effectively isolated them from history."[20]

Aboriginal students become cognizant of the process of colonization within all academic disciplines. To study Euro-colonialism requires the learner to walk amongst the thoughts of those who so aptly worked to subjugate and relegate the knowledge and history of our people into dusty volumes of theoretical discourse, fieldwork journals, and museum drawers. What is written has been sifted through multiple filters, with the product represented as valid scientific truth. This view is represented as being the "right way" to see things. Living in the reality of the overt and covert, our images of ourselves become distorted and fragmented. The task to sift through the matrix lies with the student, to ascertain what is reality and what is fabrication; it is an onerous task often abandoned, though sometimes courageously pursued. We are left with the impossible task of meticulously reconstructing tiny pieces of the shattered reflections of oneself, if we find an image at all. For students of Aboriginal ancestry, it is an arduous journey indeed.

However anthropology is not just about "digging up bones,"[21] nor is it only about "studying our grandmothers" as recently stated by a respected indigenous scholar.[22] Anthropology gives us tools to conduct research and contributes to our knowledge of culture and human beings. These tools for learning may assist us in coming to know our own cultural history, and ourselves. Whether the discipline has functioned as a gatekeeper confining indigenous knowledge, or as a thief who has stolen, plagiarized, or appropriated that which was not theirs in the first place, it remains a tool for learning towards the attainment of balance and harmony in ourselves and in our communities. Alternative interpretations of knowledge may also assist indigenous peoples to access and reconstruct systems of knowledge, to contribute to the recovery of traditional ways of being and living in the world today.

How may Aboriginal students prepare to achieve educational and career goals within a discordant universe while maintaining balance and harmony within themselves? How does a student maintain his or her equilibrium as a non-subject or object of discussion in a classroom where there is minimal recognition and very little, if any, respect demonstrated for Aboriginal people in Canada either in subject content or during class discussion? As students, we seek to learn about the world and our place within it. It is an ongoing challenge to maintain equilibrium in the classroom when learning about the history of colonization within our disciplines of study. As Aboriginal students, we are either conspicuously absent from the discourse, or unwittingly become the object of discussion, when subject matter touches upon indigenous or Aboriginal people. In the context of a classroom focused on native literature, a fellow student, shielded by the guise of objectivity, speculated the term "hybrid" to aptly described mixed blood, or Metis, people. It becomes necessary to employ one's objective self when faced with this concept, however, it remains that I experience my reality subjectively, as do others, even if they do not acknowledge it.

"It" is an odious word when applied to human beings, suggestive of a mutant construct engineered by a techno-monster,[23] commanding an artificial knowledge matrix, in a world where one's reality exists within the multi-dimensional natural realm of the universe. "It" necessitates the application of rubber gloves, to don protective lenses and a face mask to examine from afar and above, to invade and dismember, to microscopically examine with all the tools at one's command, to pronounce the findings in a rhetoric of formulaic equation to a clamoring throng of desiring initiates – only to remain confounded by a persistent elusive ethereal quality - humanness.

To Begin to Heal

As a Metis student struggling to maintain and strengthen my identity, I sought knowledge and teachings that would guide me in my learning. I found little to guide me in the discourse of academia which was far removed from the reality of native people in Canada. Volumes of negative statistics attest to the sociopolitical, economic and legal circumstances within which contemporary Aboriginal people and communities struggle Like many of the Aboriginal students on campus, I attended talks, lectures and conferences hosted by Aboriginal organizations in order to have the opportunity to listen to Aboriginal Elders, professionals, and community people speak and share their experiences to supplement my formal course reading requirements.

It came to be my good fortune to participate in a weeklong workshop facilitated and hosted by indigenous faculty, Elders and community members who shared their knowledge, experiences and perspectives concerning "Traditional Indian Education Customs". The experience was pivotal in my learning. It was one of my first experiences sitting in a classroom where I saw myself reflected back to me within the discourse presented by the instructors at the front of the room. Their voices led me to begin to comprehend I had to understand both sides, that of indigenous knowledge and of colonialism, through the eyes of indigenous people and through the eyes of the colonizer, to make sense of the world, to attain clarity of perception and harmony within. My participation in the workshop affirmed my identify and validated me as a human being. My thoughts being shared by others allowed for healing to begin.

The knowledge, thoughts, perceptions and words of indigenous educators are rare in academia. Indigenous educators need to survive colonization as well as to meet the rigorous demands of academia intact; to arrive at a place where one may speak. Their words are rare, as a whisper of wind, to the radiant glisten and sparkle of multiple tiny drops of dew, that come to settle upon the spun filament of the many clustered webs nestled close to the earth, under cloudy skies in days of summer in the bush. We need to thank them for the gift of their words. Their words illuminate our world and enrich our lives.

Indigenous peoples around the world speak of self-determination, warning against assimilation and urging the continued transmission and practices of indigenous knowledge and beliefs. The challenge is to maintain balance and harmony within ourselves while pursuing academic studies. It becomes necessary to challenge the guardians of knowledge and institutional gatekeepers to allow for individual and collective growth in the acknowledgement, and towards eradication, of the epistemological violence that awaits our children and perpetuates the annihilation of indigenous peoples ways of being. Respect for ourselves and others demands we situate ourselves in this dialogue to facilitate the expression and transmission of indigenous knowledge and culture.

Early in my academic career, as a student, it became imperative that I begin to look at my own well being. A relative suggested to me that I reflect upon the status of my mental, physical, spiritual and emotional health and wellness. Following my relative's guidance, I began to reflect upon teachings of the Cycle of Life[24] – what was the status of my mental, physical, spiritual and emotional health and well being? Insight gained through ongoing reflection prompted an understanding and awareness that I had to begin to heal in order to survive. I sought to learn from the teachings of Aboriginal people to understand myself, and begin walking a healing path in my journey of life. My participation in traditional ceremonies was the beginning of a personal journey, one that allowed for healing and growth, and awareness of the importance of balancing mental, physical, spiritual and emotional health and wellness. I am forever grateful to those who welcomed me into a circle of teaching, learning, healing and growth. A teaching prompted me to reflect upon the meaning of respect, to have respect for one self, and so began my healing. Traditionally, this would be a teaching given to young people.

My healing journey was enhanced through my involvement with the Aboriginal community on campus, in having the opportunity to access Aboriginal teachers and teachings, to interact with Elders and participate in traditional ceremonies, and to my own resolve towards healing. My personal experiences in relation to healing helped to balance the demands of academic learning. At the same time, many professors aided me in my academic studies by encouraging and challenging me to articulate my perspective. As a Metis woman, and as a student, I struggled to live within different worlds - the insular world of academia and the day-to-day world of life's realities, and from inside and outside indigenous and non-indigenous perspectives and worlds. To attain balance and harmony necessitated maintaining my integrity as a Metis woman.

As Aboriginal people, we are of necessity intricately entangled within sociopolitical processes at the local, regional, territorial or provincial, federal and/or global levels. Our experiences are similar, whether it be at the level of the individual, or at the community level, whether it be negotiating our way through our coursework, or within political processes, we each aspire to the attainment of balance and harmony. To balance the worlds we live in, it becomes necessary to actively pursue healing and wellness to attain harmony within ourselves.

Telling the Story

Today, in the contemporary sociopolitical realm of the Government of Canada, I am considered "Aboriginal". My ancestry translates to my being "Metis." In the writing of this work, the term 'indigenous' is used in consideration of a global perspective. "Aboriginal" is used as a contemporary Canadian term inclusive of "Indian, Metis and Inuit". Paul Chartrand discusses issues inherent to the "outside naming" of Aboriginal peoples in Canada[25] in an attempt to promote the "objects" of "Native Studies" and further our understanding of the difficulties in the making of Aboriginal policy in Canada. Chartrand views "outside naming" as contributing to Aboriginal people's dispossession, and subsequent dominance by settler populations. Contemporary usage of the all-encompassing "generic" noun form "Aboriginal" is "a mark of the increasing concern of Aboriginal peoples to be emancipated from outside political and social domination."[26] The term "Metis" applies to Metis people. *Metis* have come to be identified as the "forgotten people,"[27] the name a derivative from an "ancient dialect", pronounced *Michiss* or *Michef*, that came to be applied to English Metis and French Half-Breeds.

In the telling of this story, I will attempt "to practice an Aboriginal method of contextualizing knowledge"[28] guided by the teachings of indigenous educators. To this end, I attempt to maintain the context of the speaker's words and allow the indigenous educator's respective contribution's to maintain their integrity within the contextual whole within which their ideas were presented - to honour Aboriginal educators where it is conducive to do so. It is difficult to represent the strength and balance of webbed interconnections within a matrix of academic intellectual discourse.

There are parts to this work where my assumption as the writer is that you will trust I am speaking in the spirit of truth from both my head and my heart. I learned to read and write through books. As I struggle to attempt to decipher the expression of symbols and forms in their association with a new yet ancient memory, I begin to understand meaning in the structure, form and content of thought, towards a vision of balance and harmony. Now, I am relearning how to think and talk by becoming, towards being – to find my voice. I use tools that come to me, trusting these are tools I need at the time they are given. These tools allow the energy of spirit to enter into my work, to express a creative heart that allows for balance and harmony, to translate meaning through images of conceptualization, to create metonyms of understanding, to contextualize the parts that make the whole of being. I do this as a woman of Metis ancestry.

I wish to share a story from a Metis perspective in recognition of a veritable absence of written literature from a Metis perspective. In the telling of this story, I am sharing my experiences as an individual and trust the reader will not interpret what I am saying as being representative of others. I wish to show respect for, to acknowledge and honour all my relations in a good way. The Elders say to talk only about what you know. What I know is based on a combination of my life experiences, from the teachings of Aboriginal people, and from the knowledge and textual materials shared in classrooms. From an Aboriginal perspective, we are taught not to draw attention to ourselves and to conduct ourselves in a humble manner. I offer you my words and the words of others for you to consider and reflect upon and I trust you will take away with you what you need and leave behind what you do not.

There is a place of harmony and balance when we allow ourselves to stand still, to see with clarity, to hear and understand what is being said, and to speak in a good way that revitalizes the connecting of mind and heart. I talk about these things to create a space to position myself, to locate a place from which to speak, to see and reflect, to understand, to find a voice, to speak. It is not my intention to offend but rather to be respectful. I talk about these things because I think there are people who share the reality of similar experience. Each will come to understand in our own way.

My intent is to explore the gap between objectivity and subjectivity, to create a space towards becoming. I would like to evoke a reflective response in the reader using the tools I have been given, to understand experience to be where the source where strength lies, to add to an articulation of an alternative world view from a Metis perspective.

It is up to each of us to orient ourselves and speak from where we are situated. The thought compels us to grasp onto the remaining lifelines of heterogeneity, to hold on for dear life, to celebrate and honour our uniqueness in diversity.

To sit upon the earth, inside a darkened space illuminated by fire and water, utterance elicited from deep inside our being, in unison with our brothers and sisters, to sing an ancient, ancient drumsong of resonance, to honour those who have come before us, for those who are here today, and those yet to come.

Writing the Story

Early in my academic studies, I began seeking writings from other Aboriginal and indigenous people to listen to their stories about how they experienced life and viewed the world.[29] The vast cacophony of other voices housed in the compendium of knowledge in the libraries of the institution came from places where I had never been and were spoken with a viewpoint I seldom shared or held. My search also led me to the gift of ancestral family photographs found in books sitting on the library shelves. I turned to literary and cultural studies, seeking to hear the voices of indigenous writers who shared their experiences through imaginative writing. Indigenous writers worldwide are discussing the "politics of imaginative writing" and examining the fundamental precepts that shape our political and social institutions, calling for "…nothing less than a radical transformation in subjectivity…."[30]

Another intent of this writing is to invite the reader to employ imagination in learning to understand and share the world from an Aboriginal perspective. Although the use of language and shared imagination in a literary sense are sometimes ignored in academic discourse they remain inherent qualities within us, facilitating comprehension of our daily lives[31]. The alternative is to either remain silent or to resist by engaging in "…a struggle of memory against forgetting. Remembering makes us subjects of history."[32] By engaging in the construct of critical fiction, a writer "effectively critically intervenes and challenges dominant/hegemonic narratives by compelling audiences to actually transform the way they read and think…. Readers must learn to 'see' differently if they want to understand the work."[33] Writers of critical fiction "…participate in the transformation of history…" by entering a "…realm of oppositional cultural production…" each "…informed by a desire to intervene critically in the status quo….," in attempting "…to provide a cultural location for the construction of alternative readings of history."[34]

The purpose of resistance writing is to seek to heal oneself, to see clearly, and recover one's wholeness.[35]

In the classrooms of the university, within each of the disciplines whatever the subject matter, Aboriginal students learn about the colonization of indigenous peoples, whether figuratively, literally, physically or cognitively. Upon gaining an awareness of the forces and impact of colonization, we turn to our Elders, educators and communities seeking alternative ways of knowing, healing and becoming.

And so the story has begun. We are going to listen to the voices of educators, Elders and scholars who share their perceptions and understanding of our world. They will help us to see ourselves and to learn something of our history. Next, we will listen to a discourse we are surrounded with, that of politics. Then, we will go to a place far away near the center of the top of the earth where the power relations of politics, knowledge and voices unfold in the dialogue of self-government negotiations. Next, we will hear our peoples' shared understanding of leadership and governance. Then, again we will listen to the voices of people who share their perceptions and understanding of our world. Our journey takes place in a circle of understanding of the ways we learn and come to see ourselves in finding ways in becoming and being.

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[1] Tafoya, Terry (1995) "Finding Harmony: Balancing Traditional Values with Western Science in Therapy", Canadian Journal of Native Education (21): p. 20.

[2] Stan Wilson noted that Elders say this. I am not an Elder nor am I presuming to be. I determined to use the word "children" to distinguish that we are each "human beings" in that, as children, we experience the world as new and are open to listening and learning. The Pathway of Assumptions attempts to establish that we are each equal and standing side by side beside as human beings on the Earth and open to listening and learning from other's experiences. Note: See N. Scott Momaday in Chapter 2 who must have taught me this.

[3] Sprague, D.N. & R.P. Frye (1983). The Genealogy of the First Metis Nation. Pemmican Publications. Winnipeg, Manitoba.

[4] Metis Association of the Northwest Territories (1976), Our Metis Heritage...A Portrayal. Yellowknife, N.W.T.

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[5] Personal Communication with Pat McCormack, a Professor with the School of Native Studies, University of Alberta, who worked in Fort Chipewyan and who graciously provided a copy of the Mercredi family genealogy.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Hay River, Northwest Territories. In Dene Cultural Institute (1989) Dehcho: "Mom, We've Been Discovered!" Hay. River, N.W.T.

[8] Great Slave Lake, Northwest Territories. Ibid.

[9] Fort Smith, Northwest Territories. Ibid.

[10] Many northern Metis, and others elsewhere, both Metis and non-status would later become registered status Indians following enactment of Bill C-31 legislation by the Government of Canada in 1985.

[11] Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau introduced the White Paper on Indian Policy to Canadians in 1969 proposing "equality" for Indians in Canada. The intent was to accord Inuit and Indian people the same status as other Canadians. The White Paper proposed to "repeal the Indian Act to enable Natives to control their lands and acquire title to them; have the provincial governments assume responsibility for Natives as they have for other citizens in their province; make substantial funds available for Native economic development as an interim measure; phase out the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, which deals with Native affairs; and, appoint a commissioner to consult with Natives and to study and recommend acceptable procedures for the adjudication of claims." See Frideres, James S. (1988) Native People in Canada: Contemporary Conflicts. Prentice-Hall Canada Inc. Scarborough, Ontario. Source: Indian Policy (1969) p. 6.

[12] In 1973, Dene Chiefs filed a caveat to 450,000 square miles of land in the Mackenzie Valley on grounds the federal government had not fulfilled its treaty obligations and that the treaties did not represent a surrender of land to the Crown. The Supreme Court of the Northwest Territories ruled there was sufficient doubt that the land was not surrendered, however the decision was overturned based on a technicality. The Government of Canada agreed to enter into negotiations with the Dene concerning unfulfilled treaty negotiations. Ibid. Note 11.

[13] In the Northwest Territories, the Indian Brotherhood of the Northwest Territories was established in 1970 followed by the formation of the Metis Association in 1972. See Alexie, Robert A. (1997) "A History of the Gwich'in, the Gwich'in Land Claim Process and a Summary of the Gwich'in Agreement." Unpublished paper. Inuvik, N.W.T.

[14] The Berger Royal Commission of Inquiry held public hearings in communities throughout the North concerning the proposed construction of a pipeline through the Mackenzie Valley. Proceedings were broadcast on CBC Radio North. The Berger Royal Commission of Inquiry brought to the forefront of the Canadian public an understanding that the Dene, as indigenous occupants of the land, held rights to their homeland.

[15] Watkins, Mel. (1977) Dene Nation: the colony within. University of Toronto Press: Toronto. p. 4.

[16] Archibald, Joanne and S. S. Bowman (1995) "Honoring What They Say", Canadian Journal of Native Education. 21(1): p. 5.

[17] Ibid. p. 161. The term "First Nations" applies only to those students defined as "Indian" under the Indian Act as treaty status or registered Indians who are represented by First Nations

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organizations and receive educational funding as per the provisions of the treaties. The term "First Nations" excludes Non-status Indians, Metis and Inuit.

[18] Wilson, Peggy and Wilson, Stan (1995) "Forward; First Biannual Indigenous Scholars' Conference", Canadian Journal of Native Education. 21:p. 1-2.

[19] Henderson, James (Sakej) Youngblood (2000) "Postcolonial Ghost Dancing: Diagnosing European Colonialism" in Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision. UBC Press. Vancouver. p. 59.

[20] Rosaldo, R. (1989) Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis. Beacon Press. Boston. Ibid. p. 65.

[21] Medicine, Beatrice. (1995) "Prologue to a Vision of Aboriginal Education", Canadian Journal of Native Education, 21: p. 42-45.

[22] Commented by Native American scholar, Ward Churchill, in a talk given to Aboriginal students at the University of Alberta in February 2001.

[23] See Haraway, Donna. (1988) "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective." Feminist Studies, 3: p. 575-599. Discussed elsewhere in this paper.

[24] Although the concept of the "Medicine Wheel" is commonly used, educator Stan Wilson advises that some Elders take exception to the use of the word "wheel," being a European construct, and in consideration the teachings of the "Cycle of Life" in its many forms, would clearly have been "traditional" long before wheels arrived in North America. In the north, Inuit use the term "Cycle of Life" – this term is used rather than Medicine Wheel in keeping with traditional perspectives.

[25] Chartrand, Paul. (1991) "Terms of Division": Problems of 'Outside-Naming' for Aboriginal People in Canada. Journal of Indigenous Studies, 2(2): p. 1-22.

[26] Ibid. p. 5.

[27] D. B. Sealey and A. S. Lussier (1975) in Ibid.

[28] Anderson, Kim (2000) A Recognition of Being: Reconstructing Native Womanhood. Second Story Press. Toronto. p. 21.

[29] Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. (1999) Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples. Zed Books. New York. p. 14.

[30] Mariani, Philomena (1991) "God is a Man" in Critical Fictions: The Politics of Imaginative Writing. Bay Press. Seattle. p. 12.

[31] Morrison, Toni. (1993) Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination. Vintage Books. New York. Ibid. Note 29. p. 37.

[32] Hooks, Bell. (1993) "Narratives of Struggle" in Critical Fictions: The Politics of Imaginative Writing. Edited by Philomena Mariani. Bay Press. Seattle. p. 54.

[33] Ibid. p. 57.

[34] Ibid. p. 58-59.

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[35] Hanh, Thich Nhat and Daniel Berrigan. (1975) The Raft Is Not the Shore. Beacon Press. Boston. Ibid. Note 32. p. 154.

Chapter 2 – Philosophy and Vision: Indigenous Teaching and Learning

Indigenous people in North America learn to view the world in relation to the knowledge passed on from previous generations. Traditions, values and beliefs are woven within the telling of stories, teachings and legends that are passed on from generation to generation, and have been for thousands and thousands of years. Indigenous people come to learn they are a part of the land since Creation. Indigenous knowledge is founded upon the principle of truth. Truth is a learned principle whereby the speaker reveals a connection with mind and heart, transmitting experiential time and space, to convey a reality through the spoken word. The repetition and transmission of a truth yields the survival of knowledge over an incomprehensible chronology.

My approach to a review of the literature is to identify elements that are conducive to communicating the essence of an indigenous perspective towards a shared understanding and to increase our capacity for dialogue and internal growth. There are many aspects to a shared understanding in the many layers of intricately woven meaning inherent to a multidimensional existence. Because the transmission of indigenous dialogues is densely structured, with multiple meanings, texts are quoted verbatim as a form of acknowledgement and respect for the teachings. To reduce the complexity of the teacher's words is to render them as simplistic, to diminish their power, and distort their reality. Oftentimes, their discourse is not conducive to paraphrasing. I could neither reduce the complexity of their dialogue nor could I paraphrase and maintain the meaning of the dialogue. The exercise of translating and interpreting the words of our teachers' poses a threat to the integrity of their conceptualizations, the context of which need remain whole.

Voicing of Vision

> The old man speaks… "This knowledge comes in many ways. Quietly sometimes/ in the whisper of a butterfly's wings, or the rustling of the grasses/ blown by the winds… It can come quickly/ in a flash so fast/ you/ may miss it/ a single bolt of lightning/ in a silent humid/ sky. It can come slowly/ piece by piece/ over the years/ …partly revealed/ in the markings of a feather/ then on to a misty/ half remembered dream."[1]

A turning point for Aboriginal students at the University of Alberta came during the First Indigenous Scholars Conference hosted by the First Nations Graduate Degree Program at the University of Alberta in 1995. Respected indigenous educators and Elders shared their perspectives with the Aboriginal students in attendance in the spirit of "compassion, respect, truth and excellence."[2]

Terry Tafoya, a traditional Native American storyteller and distinguished educator, offered a dynamic perspective on the identification of alternative ways of seeing things. He stressed the importance of doing what you have to do to get where you want to be and to looking for strength and resources within yourself and your community. Tafoya is a storyteller. He tells us, "…I think we are made of stories. When we die people remember the stories that we told." "Listen, stories go in circles, they don't go in straight lines."[3] "It helps if you listen in circles, because there are stories inside and between stories, and finding your way through them is as easy and as hard as finding your way home. Part of finding is getting lost, and when you're lost you start to open up and listen."[4] Tafoya called for us to consider the many "unquestioned answers" we encounter in our pursuit of education and stressed the critical importance of "holistic experience." He says,

> "In my experience Native tradition provides foundation or floor but never a ceiling. This allows you to grow in your own sophistication, knowledge, and development, to give you the foundation to grow from, but it doesn't set a ceiling that stops learning. Setting a ceiling is the Western way that defines something rigidly. This rigidity stops growth and freezes things in terms of how we understand them at any time."[5]

Tafoya, who identifies himself as an epistemologist, considers epistemology as:

> "…the science of knowing what it is that you know and how you know what you know… We have a worldview, a paradigm or way of making sense of things. When we receive new information we process it through our old worldview, our old paradigm, so new information will not necessarily change our belief system and will certainly not necessarily change our behaviour. It is important to remember this."[6]

Tafoya conceptualizes:

> "…the Tafoya Principle of Uncertainty. This Principle states that in cross-cultural research one can have definition or one can have context, but not both at the same time. In other words, the more one tries to define something, the more one removes from its context. The more one recognizes the context of something, the less possible it is to give a specific definition of it."[7]

To Tafoya, harmony may be found in understanding our different ways of doing things, "…not understanding these differences may cause tremendous problems if there is no recognition of different ways of doing things."[8] Pathology is distinguished as "repeating the same pattern over and over again" and impeding the healing process which is "moving away from one way of responding – one pattern of behavior – to many…. Part of the healing process is realizing there are many different perspectives, that is, many ways of perceiving and understanding the world."[9] Harmony is in the telling of many different stories from many perspectives, "…harmony exists only as a function of difference."[10] Tafoya concluded his address reminding us that "…the healing process is a way of recapturing wholeness… It is a sacred work to reclaim wholeness."[11] Tafoya's unique presentation style offered the foregoing critical elements to an aboriginal perspective in a form that interspersed analogy within traditional storytelling and visual aids, while at the same time introducing provocative contemporary issues.

"Language As Sacred"

The late Lionel Kinunwa, was an indigenous scholar and Elder of Lakota ancestry who studied twenty-seven language groups and nine dialects of indigenous languages for over thirty years. The Elder came to the University of Alberta to teach a class[12] on the "Revitalization of Indigenous Languages." The Elder held language to be sacred. Following is a recapitulation of my understanding of the Elder's conceptualization of the revitalization of indigenous languages based on a review of lecture notes. He stressed the vital importance of spirituality to teaching and healing as fundamental to an alternative approach to knowledge, learning and knowing. The Elder's perception of indigenous languages helps us to understand the importance of indigenous languages. All of the concepts in the following section are those as shared by the Elder based on his knowledge and experience as a speaker of the Lakota language and his work with indigenous languages. He was deeply concerned that today fewer and fewer people understand the meaning inherent to indigenous language.

Kinunwa held indigenous languages to be the history of indigenous people. To the Elder, language was similar to a "multi-phased system of thinking." Kinunwa was interested in constructing a meta-model that would assist in the translation of an understanding of the multi-dimensional system of indigenous languages to English speakers who function within the one-dimensional linear system of the English language. He considered there to be mechanisms inherent in indigenous languages that protect the structural whole when another system encroaches upon the structural integrity of the language. His motivation was not to teach a multi-phased system, but rather to remind us of its existence, and thereby work towards the healing of young indigenous people.

The Elder spoke of the parents and grandparents who chose not to teach their indigenous languages to their children as brave and honourable people who wanted only for their children to learn to survive in a world where the English language had became the dominant language. Given the strength, power and beauty within indigenous languages, for the parents not to teach their language to their children was like the wrenching of one's blood and bones from oneself. Kinunwa said the legacy of the Elders' experience of residential school was the loss of parenting skills, and the breaking of bonds between parent and child, at a time when the English language was equated with intelligence of the individual and of people. The sense of family was lost amongst native families and within native communities. He reminded us that at the time, the loss of indigenous languages meant the survival of the children; this imparted a legacy of work towards the revitalization of indigenous languages to the current generation of indigenous learners.

Kinunwa believed that all indigenous people need to go through the grieving process, piece by piece – alcoholism, sexual abuse, and family violence. He said we need to ask ourselves, how much damage was done? How is it reflected in the community? Each community need participate in the healing process, not to blame others, but with the understanding that part of sharing is reminding. The Elder said the ceremony of the sacred bundle is to transfer knowledge from one generation to another – to apply the communication system inherent in language within the community for our mental health and physical well being.

Kinunwa said we each have the opportunity to access our reflective consciousness, to develop a meta-language, to translate meaning towards the understanding of another knowledge system and our way of existence. He held indigenous languages to be philosophical systems that developed over thousands of years. Knowledge comes when one looks at the time depth and root meanings of words, and their connections to one another. His example was to trace the connections between the words "spirit" and "breath." Air creates life. The utterance of words gives spirit life. The Elder stated that sound is sacred, embedded within us and capable of being revitalized within our sensory cellular memories. The vibrational sound of our people resonates within our bodies. Kinunwa held indigenous language thinker's knowledge to be transmitted in a way that allows one to "know".

Traditions are the natural laws of a people. The context of ceremony is essential to view life as a sacred ceremony. Ceremony translates from generation to generation the sacred wisdom of our people. Culture and tradition are viewed by indigenous people in the indigenous way of saying, "attached to our culture" and "bonded to our traditions." These are ways and instructions to keep culture healthy in human ways. It is up to us to understand relations and follow traditions, to remember the molecular structure of energy of the universe is within us, to remember the wisdom, energy, and power in the universe, in all living things. Verbality is only one part of communication in the spirit of language.

Kinunwa's dream was for indigenous educators to develop indigenous methodologies. Indigenous languages are knowledge systems within which language and ceremony transfer knowledge from one generation to another. Kinunwa called for indigenous educators to develop methodologies based on indigenous standards and principles. A basis for teaching and learning in an oral transfer system is to use repetition - to repeat everyone who has repeated where you are – to repeat what you have come know as truth from the teachings of others. Kinunwa asked us to deliver something that will protect the knowledge system. In consideration of the objective vs. subjective dichotomy, Kinunwa considered the experiential to become subjective, for indigenous thinkers the experiential turns into an explanation of what we see and experience. He urged students to develop indigenous research methodologies to bring out the standards and principles of indigenous research that move towards models of community healing processes.

Kinunwa said, our language is our history book. The Elder's advice to the students in attendance was for us to keep one foot in the world of academia, and the other foot firmly planted in the sacred of past of our people. To be balanced as we look down the road of today - to have one foot in the future and one foot in the past - to maintain our balance as we walk in the present.

The Elder Lionel Kinunwa came and shared his understanding and vision of the relationship of language to being. With him came a healing energy that came through the words, teachings and knowledge he shared with us; it remains with us today.

Indigenous Educators

Stan Wilson, professor of education at the University of Alberta, encouraged us to honour our spiritual knowledge in a discussion demonstrating the strength borne of merging one's mind and heart. As students we need to be prepared for our learning, and develop a consciousness of how we are affected by our experiences and how our actions affect others. Stan reminded us to reflect on our experiences and to acknowledge and be grateful for the unceasing presence of our ancestors in the sacredness of the land. He reminded us to pay attention to ourselves and shared the teachings of indigenous educator, Lionel Kinunwa, who said, – "We have memories. Our ancestral memories are in your blood, they're in your muscles, they're in your bones, they're in your hair, and those memories are there."[13] Wilson continued,

> "We don't pay attention to our historic memory. That is why when we hear the drum, our spirit is moved. This is because the vibrations of the drum stir old memories – our ancestral memories. These memories come out of the molecular structure of our being. This is also why when you hear someone speaking your own language, your molecular structure picks up those vibrations, because each language has its own peculiar patterns, and you feel good that somebody is speaking your language."[14]

Wilson contended human physiology both compels and constrains our experience of the phenomenological, limiting our awareness to the full spectrum of experiential visual and auditory phenomena. Participation in ceremonies may physiologically prepare us for phenomenological experience.[15] Wilson encouraged us to pay attention to our thoughts, dreams and emotions, to better understand our interaction and interrelationship with our environment towards the attainment of balance by all peoples in the world we live in today.

Carlos Cordero, a Mayan scholar, discussed Native cultures as found on this continent over five hundred years ago. Cordero says that the indigenous people of the Americas had a different human consciousness, one where "people would continually articulate linguistically through metaphors what they knew in terms of their experience, in terms of their perception of that experience, and in terms of the meaning of that perception of their experience." Indigenous people are different from Europeans "in terms of the categories and priorities of their behavior as humans."[16] By contrasting Western knowledge and Native knowledge, Cordero determined the Native knowledge base to have an integrated science that was both religious and aesthetic. Native people approach knowledge using intuition in addition to the intellect and senses. "The mind demands logic and reason, the senses demand empiricism, but intuition demands myth, symbol, and metaphor."[17] To Cordero, knowledge should be moral and encompass esthetics and beauty.

Cordero identified the loss of knowledge as a significant problem in the development of alternative approaches to the education of Native learners.

> "Science has allowed us to understand that the disappearance of up to 90% of the Native populations of the Americas was directly due not to humans, but to microbes and viruses. You begin to understand that when there is a massive loss of humanity – in modern history called a holocaust – of 90 % of your people, you also lose 90% of your knowledge base."[18]

The holocaust, and resultant loss of knowledge, was followed by the experience of military conquest. Cordero contends we no longer know who are, and that, "in the process of becoming educated we are in fact engaging in processes of colonization."[19]

Cordero calls for the development of the native learner from a native perspective through the development of native educational systems. A Native model of education would develop a person,

> "...as someone who has a face and a heart, which means there is substance and form. Education is not simply having knowledge. A person has to demonstrate other aspects of knowledge that reflect a grounding of one's humanity in the larger environmental, ecological, real world. This model requires that we develop the morals of the learner and that the level and degree of happiness of the learner be as real as the intellectual processes of memory and recall allow. This model will

> produce different kinds of human beings.[20] …The native way engages in catalytic processes allowing for growth and development in a harmonious, cooperative, dynamic, and balancing way within individuals, between individuals, and between individuals and the environment."[21]

Indigenous scholars and Elders repeatedly state that the preservation of Native cultures is dependent upon the teaching of Native languages. "To begin to understand the mind of a Native person before Columbus requires an ability to understand time, space, matter, energy, and how those things are related to each other."[22] Cordero believes that there are biological aspects that contribute to the failure of Native learners today. Specifically he identifies nutrition loss in the change from traditional diets high in complex carbohydrates, complex proteins and amino acids to contemporary diets high in sugar and salt and lacking in vitamins and minerals.[23] Towards recovering the pre-Columbian knowledge of the Americas, Cordero proposes, "we must engage in processes whereby we go to sources, including European sources, working with non-Native people to engage in archaeological processes of recovering Native knowledge and information that does exist here."[24] The Americas are a "cultural continuum" with indigenous peoples globally having knowledge bases that may contribute to an indigenous epistemology. The imposition of the concept of culture from a Euro-Western understanding is an "instrument of oppression" necessitating a re-visioning of the construct of culture from a Native perspective.

Beatrice Medicine, a distinguished Lakota Sioux anthropologist who has for several decades contributed to the discipline, advocates for scholarly excellence, encouraging us to develop an awareness of our own cultural orientations and values, while cautioning us concerning the manufacture of idealized or contrived cultures. As an Elder, Medicine stressed the importance of maintaining our identities while continuing to meet the challenge of living in a bicultural world.[25]

A Guiding Philosophy for Indigenous Education

Gregory Cajete explored Pueblo metaphors of indigenous education in an attempt to create a context for the evolution of a contemporized guiding philosophy of education for indigenous people. "A Pueblo community is a high-context learning environment in which we are constantly being taught. Every event and every situation we encounter in our community are usually learning experiences."[26] Cajete called for the renewal and revival of an indigenous viewpoint for our children and for ourselves. Indigenous education allows us to reflect upon the meaning of the journey we continue to walk.

> "There is a shared body of understanding among many Indigenous people that education is really about helping an individual find his or her face, which means finding out who you are, where you come from, and your unique character. That education should also help to find your heart, which is that passionate sense of self that motivates you and moves you along in life. In addition, education should help you to find a foundation on which you may most completely develop and express both your heart and your face. That foundation is your vocation, the work that you do, whether it be as an artist, lawyer, or teacher. This then, is the intent of Indigenous education. It is finding that special kind of work that most fully allows you to express your true self – 'Your heart and your face'."[27]

The goal of indigenous education is completeness, to learn about relationships in context, within family, community, tribe and the world. Cajete identified the major foundations of indigenous education as: community, technical environmental knowledge in the sense of understanding and interacting with a place, learning through dreams and vision, viewing the world through mythic traditions, and spiritual ecology, which is the "…intimate relationship that people establish with place and with the environment and with all of the things that make them or give them life."[28] The foundation of learning takes many forms and involves the teaching of children. "The goal of indigenous education is to perpetuate a way of life through the generations and through time."[29] Indigenous people develop systems and ways of living based on their environment that are expressed through symbols such as those found in traditional art forms. "Hunting is a spiritual journey and a way of understanding one's relationship with animals and with the world."[30] "Dances are metaphors for the things that have meaning…."[31] for Indigenous people. Dances as art forms have evolved over thousands of years. Spiritual ecology is "…in the relationships with the land, with the places where we have lived for generations."[32] This relationship manifests itself in celebration and in the sharing of food. Spirituality is expressed in many ways and reflects metaphorical understandings and perspectives that parallel images of indigenous life and education."[33]

As a professor, Cajete deals "…with two worlds and two ways of knowing…"[34] and endeavours to instill a healing process for the many students who are struggling to cope with a "split head." For Cajete, "teaching is a way of healing and a way of life…." which requires one to "…feel for the spirit of teaching".[35] "Teaching is really about finding face, finding heart, finding foundation, and doing that in the context of family, of community, of relationships with the whole environment."[36] Cajete uses a cultural historical foundation to teach native students where they have come from and to understand how the existing educational/political/social contract functions to oppress. He called upon us to examine our habitual thought processes and reexamine our way of thinking and to "reflect on Indigenous thought, Indigenous science, and Indigenous education based on their own merits and on their own terms."[37]

> "Indigenous knowledge is an internally consistent system. It validates itself… Finding a balance and attending to one's self and to where one stands are the first steps in our collective journey of rediscovery. We have then to be responsible to ourselves, our communities, our ancestry, and our personal gifts."[38]

Cajete says we have a responsibility to the children,

> "…and to the information and the knowledge that we convey. Thinking that they know the Native person's mind and being is a mistake that has been made many times by many non-Native people. That's the reason Native people have begun to reflect and to write in their voices about their own experience. That is the only way to begin to correct the process of misunderstanding."[39]

To Cajete, "knowledge is like a cloud" and "we as tribal people have maps in our heads."[40]

> "Some of our maps are tattered and torn, erased or eradicated. The maps that we have in our heads as Indigenous people are inherited and enfolded within our genes. Many Indian people and elders have said that we don't lose knowledge. Knowledge, like a cloud, comes in and out of being. Knowledge comes to us when we need it. It evolves and develops. When things are needed, they come."[41]

As a teacher, Cajete is "a facilitator of learning processes and a creator of contexts for learning."[42]

> "Indigenous people are interested in finding the proper moral and ethical relationships to the world in order for them to become "complete" human beings. Indigenous knowledge is derived from communal experience, from environmental observation, from information received, and from the visions attained through ceremonies and communion with spirits of nature. Indigenous people believe that the universe is a moral universe; we look at it and deal with it in terms of a moral framework."[43]

Cajete asks, "What is our history? What are our tools? What action can we take for this process to manifest itself in ourselves and in our communities and in the ways we teach other?"[44] These questions will assist us in the process of evoking and asking for direction.

Dialogue for Teaching and Learning

Further to the foregoing discussion offered by distinguished visiting educators and resident academic staff, were additional contributions that related relevant themes concerning the education of Aboriginal students. Metis anthropologist Carl Urion contended: "It is not a 'translation' of one world view to another that is required, but access to the multidimensionality provided by two pairs of eyes."[45] In his discussion of the dialectics or tension to be found between institutionally based academic discourse and native discourse, Urion discussed the underlying framework of an acculturation model in academic discourse where the subordinate culture will unconsciously adopt the values of the dominant culture.[46] Dialectics is the term chosen to describe the acculturation model as "…a relationship between opposing poles or juxtaposed positions, statements, and populations; a process of either maintenance or resolution of those appositions, leading to a specification of larger contexts of apposition."[47] The action of placing an entity beside another serves as adding to, explaining the first, or being in connection to the other. Two entities as oppositional, or juxtaposed in an asymmetrical fashion, not in balance or harmony, give authority to one over the other. Individuals are assigned to either culture based on ascribed cultural traits and values, and success is based upon the cultural traits and values, or cultural property, one possesses from the other.

Native discourse is characterized by Urion as not being dialectical, but rather, as possessing the following characteristics: belief in the integrity of the person, an assumption of unity and wholeness, investigation towards discovering the properties of the unifying context, essentially empirical observation, the requirement – not just the acknowledgment – that the observer be part of the observation, evaluation of statements in terms of multiple contexts and according to where the statements originate, consideration of the moral authority of the person making the statement, the relationship between the person of moral authority and another person creates the discourse, dialogue plays with levels of metaphor and implication, metaphor is powerful and may be interpreted at many different levels in many different contexts, an explicit statement is an elementary one, the learner must "engage" in a process of the creation of the discourse, placement of the agents in time and space (relative to the earth and to natural process), an all-encompassing context and, an intimacy of interaction that usually occurs face-to-face.[48]

According to Native educator Eber Hampton:

> "At a cultural level, Native and non-Native conceive of their meeting in a different terms and do not understand the other's actions, thoughts, or purpose. Their sense of time, of space, of energy, of humanity, are all different. Truth, beauty, and justice are all marked and evaluated differently. Epistemology, ontology, and cosmology are all different."[49]

An iterative or repetitive approach as distinguished by Hampton, is suggestive of a form, "…in a spiral that adds a little with each repetition of a theme."[50] Native educators often frame teachings based on the use of the Cycle of Life using either four or six directions. The presentation of themes allows for "reflective thinking" in the hopes that the reader will develop "…a habit of mind that thoughtfully considers a speaker's words looking for what can be built on."[51] Ideas are introduced to stimulate reflective thinking in the reader.

In his article "Toward a Redefinition of American Indian/Alaska Native Education," Eber Hampton discusses his position on Indian education using the iterative device of the Six directions of the Cycle of Life as a pattern for understanding data – the sacred pattern serves as an organizing principle and assists in directing his interpretation.[52] He suggests that a lack of theory concerning native education underlies the limited success of native education programs. As his contribution to development of a theory, Hampton identifies emergent themes based on a series of interviews conducted with native graduate students at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. His methodological approach incorporates grounded theory, qualitative analysis and participant observation using "….interview data, the existing literature and an analysis of his own experience to move toward a theory of Indian education."[53] Data analysis led to the emergence of these categories or themes: identity, being the core or essence of being; spirituality, in relation to a recognition of; service, as in being service oriented to one's community; culture, concerning communication and thought styles; affiliation, as in community member; freedom, or individual autonomy; education, being the education of native, or, native education; and, place, as in referents to a physical location or concerning the significance of a home, place or territory. The Six Directions are employed to organize and clarify thought, "...as a way of thinking about existing...."[54] to identify several standards to be addressed by a theory of native education.

Walter Lightning, a Cree educator, applied an iterative framework as an alternative approach in his examination and interpretation of a text about the nature of the mind as communicated in the Cree language by the late Elder Louis Sunchild. Principles underlying the text are consistent with Cree protocols, which establish the teacher/ learner relationship in a text where meaning is translated through a mental/physical/ emotional/spiritual framework. The establishment of protocols between teacher and learner facilitates the transmission of knowledge between Elders and younger generations.[55] Translation of meaning as a process introduces alternative ways of teaching and learning.

Okanagan native writer and educator, Jeannette Armstrong, contrasted modern education with the process of teaching the traditional indigenous view as occurring in everyday activities. Armstrong writes,

> "Learning and teaching in the traditional view ensures cultural continuity and survival of mental, spiritual, emotional and physical well-being of the unit and of its environment, the family, the community and people as a whole. Quality education must be based on indigenous educational methods not only to ensure our survival as indigenous peoples but for our very existence as humans."[56]

Orality, Words, Writing and Voices

Metis writer Kim Anderson shared the experience of her journey to "'recognize my being': to recognize by working through a spiritual and physical remembering, and to re-cognize via mental and emotional constructing."[57] She begins her story with a quotation by Mohawk scholar Patricia Monture-Angus,

> "As I have come to understand it from listening to the Elders and traditional teachers, the only person I can speak about is myself. That is how the Creator made all of us... All I have to share with you is myself, my experience, and how I have come to understand that experience."[58]

Anderson notes,

> "Many cultures teach us that we carry the memories of our ancestors in our physical being. As such, we are immediately connected to those who have gone before us. We live with the trauma that has plagued the previous generations. We know their laughter, but also their sorrows."[59]

Through an exploration of her identity, Anderson reclaimed her Native heritage, "…finding solace, acceptance and solidarity among the urban Native population."[60] Anderson's journey led her to ask the questions: "What am I not? Where have I come from? Where am I going? and, What are my responsibilities?"[61] She proposes that Native women engage in an identity formation process involving: "resisting negative definitions of being; reclaiming Aboriginal tradition; constructing a positive identity by translating tradition into the contemporary context; and, acting on that identity in a way that nourishes the overall well-being of our communities," to engage in a process to: "resist, reclaim, construct and act."[62]

As students, much of our learning takes place through the written word. I wish to share with you the teachings and words of native writers whose work I respect and who taught me to begin to listen. To balance perspectives, I have selected the works of two men and two women, each highly respected as Native American writers. N. Scott Momaday and Simon Oritz works' have been in print for decades. Momaday was awarded a Pulitzer Prize in 1969 for his writing. Leslie Marmon Silko and Paula Gunn Allen, whose works have been published over the past decade, share a sense of power, strength and beauty through their perceptions of our world in a unique and compelling way. It was a honour for me to participate as a student in a class concerning "From Orality to Literacy" conducted by Paula Gunn Allen at the University of Alberta in 1996. We have amongst us many teachers and many ways of learning. These writers and educators communicate using the written word as a tool to disseminate the spoken word. They share their knowledge and worldview, telling us that the telling of stories is important to our identity, to our culture and for teaching and learning. They warn us about the ways in which knowledge and words may be used and caution our usage of the word. We are again told that language and words are sacred. I choose not to critically analyze nor synthesize their teachings, allowing you to shape your own understanding of their words.

In so doing, I am showing my respect for each of them, the teachings they are sharing, and for you, the reader.

In "The Language We Know", Simon Oritz, Acoma of New Mexico, tell us,

> I don't remember a world without language. From the time of my earliest childhood, there was language. Always language, and imagination, speculation, utters of sound. Words, beginnings of words. What would I be without language? My existence has been determined by language, not only the spoken but the unspoken, the language of speech and the language of motion. I can't remember a world without memory. Memory, immediate and far away in the past, something in the sinew, blood, ageless cell. Although I don't recall the exact moment I spoke or tried to speak, I know the feeling of something tugging at the core of the mind, something unutterable uttered into existence. It is language that brings us into being in order to know life...
>
> ...We come from an ageless, continuing oral tradition that informs us of our values, concepts and notions as native people, and it is amazing how much of this tradition is ingrained so deeply in our contemporary writing, considering the brutal efforts of cultural repression that was not long ago out right U.S. policy. We were not to speak our languages, practice our spiritual beliefs, or accept the values of our past generations; and we were discouraged from pressing for our natural rights as Indian human beings. In spite of the fact that there is to some extent the same repression today, we persist and insist in living believing, hoping, loving, speaking, and writing as Indians. This is embodied in the language we know and share in our writing. We have always had this language, and it is the language, spoken and unspoken, that determines our existence, that brought our grandmothers and grandfathers and ourselves into being in order that there be continuing life.[63]

In "Tosamah's Story," N. Scott Momaday, of Kiowa and Cherokee ancestry, writes,

> ...The white man has his ways. Oh gracious me, he has his ways. He talks about the Word. He talks through it and around it. He builds upon it with syllables, with prefixes and suffixes and hyphens and accents. He adds and divides and multiplies the Word. And in all of this he subtracts the Truth. And, brothers and sisters, you have come here to live in the white man's world. Now the white man deals in words, and he deals easily, with grace and sleight of hand. And in his presence, here on his own ground, you are as children, mere babes in the woods. You must not mind this, for in this you have a certain advantage. A child can listen and learn. The word is sacred to a child....
>
> ...My grandmother was a storyteller; she knew her way around words. She never learned to read and write, but somehow she knew the good of reading and writing; she had learned how to listen and delight. She had

> learned that in words and language, and there only, she could have whole and consummate being. She told me stories, and she taught me how to listen. I was a child and I listened. She could neither read nor write, you see, but she taught me how to live among her words, how to listen and delight. "Storytelling; to utter and to hear..." And the simple act of listening is crucial to the concept of language, more crucial even than reading and writing and language in turn is crucial to human society. There is proof of that, I think in all the histories and pre-histories of human experience....
>
> ...When that Kiowa woman told me stories, I listened with only one ear. I was a child, and I took the words for granted. I did not know what all of them meant, but somehow I held on to them; I remembered them, and I remember them now. The stories were old and dear; they meant a great deal to my grandmother. It was not until she died that I knew how much they meant to her. I began to think about it, and then I knew. When she told me those old stories, something strange and good and powerful was going on. I was a child, and that old woman was asking me to come directly into the presence of her mind and spirit; she was taking hold of my imagination, giving me to share in the great fortune of her wonder and delight. She was asking me to go with her to the confrontation of something that was sacred and eternal. It was a timeless, timeless thing; nothing of her old age or of my childhood came between us....
>
> ...Consider for a moment that old Kiowa woman, my grandmother, whose use of language was confined to speech. And be assured that her regard for words was always keen in proportion as she depended upon them. You see, for her words were medicine; they were magic invisible. They came from nothing into sound and meaning. They were beyond price; they could neither be bought nor sold. And she never threw words away.[64]

Leslie Marmon, of mixed blood Laguna ancestry, talks about the role of storytelling in indigenous communities:

> ...Language is story...often speakers or tellers will go into these word-stories, creating an elaborate structure of stories within stories....this perspective on narrative – of story within story, the idea that one story is only the beginning of many stories, and the sense that stories truly never end – represents an important contribution of Native American cultures to the English language.... storytelling always includes the audience....storytelling continues from generation to generation....the origin story constructs our identity – with this story, we know who we are....this is where we come from....we came this way....we came by this place....and so from the time we are very young, we hear these stories, so that we go out into the world, when one asks who we are, or where we are from we immediately know....we are the people of these stories....it is the people who are of this story, and this is our people....an individual's identity will extend from the identity constructed around the

> family....stories are always bringing us together, keeping this whole together, keeping this family together, keeping this clan together....storytelling is an ongoing process working on many different levels....stories are, in a sense, maps....a story never beginning at the beginning, and certainly never ending....many stories within one story....stories that give one a family identity and an individual identity....and as the old people say, if you can remember the stories, you will be all right, just remember the stories....our stories cannot be separate from their geographical locations, from actual physical places on the land....and our stories are so much a part of these places that it is almost impossible for future generations to lose them – there is a story connected with every place, every object in the landscape....the 'yet unborn' as well as 'those from the past,' and how we are still all in this place, and the language – the storytelling – is our way of passing through of being with them, of being together again...'they are out there....let them come in....they're here, they're here with us within the stories'.... to understand through an appreciation for the boundless capacity of language that, through storytelling, brings us together, despite great distances between cultures, despite great distances in time.[65]

Paula Gunn Allen is of Laguna Pueblo, Sioux and Lebanese heritage. She writes for us about native women:

> An American Indian woman is primarily defined by her tribal identity...
>
> My ideas of womanhood, passed on largely by my mother and grandmothers, Laguna Pueblo women, are about practicality, strength, reasonableness, intelligence, wit, and competence...Nowhere in my mind is there a foolish woman, a dumb woman, a vain woman, or a plastic woman, though the Indian woman I have known have shown a wide range of personal style and demeanor...And I remember the women who drank, who got into fights with other women and with the men, and who often won those battles. I have memories of tired women, partying women, stubborn women, sullen women, amicable women, selfish women, shy women, and aggressive women....
>
> ...Since the coming of the Anglo-Europeans beginning in the fifteenth century, the fragile web of identity that long held tribal people secure has gradually been weakened and torn. But the oral tradition has prevented the complete destruction of the web, the ultimate disruption of tribal ways. The oral tradition is vital; it heals itself and the tribal web by adapting to the flow of the present while never relinquishing its connection to the past. Its adaptability has always been required, as many generations have experienced. Certain the modern American Indian woman bears slight resemblance to her forebears – at least on superficial examination – but she is still a tribal woman in her deepest being. Her tribal sense of relationship to all that is continues to flourish. And though she is at times beset by her knowledge of the enormous gap between the life she lives and the life she was raised to live, and while she adapts her mind and being to the circumstances of her present life, she does so in tribal ways,

> mending the tears in the web of being from which she takes her existence as she goes....
>
> ...Most women I know are in the same bicultural bind: we vacillate between being dependent and strong, self-reliant and powerless, strongly motivated and hopelessly insecure. We resolve the dilemma in various ways; some of us party all the time; some of us drink to excess; some of us travel and move around a lot; some of us land good jobs and then quit them; some of us engage in violent exchanges; some of us blow our brains out. We act in these destructive ways because we suffer from the societal conflicts caused by having to identify with two hopelessly opposed cultural definitions of women....But a force is growing....and it is helping Indian women reclaim their lives. Their power, their sense of direction and of self will soon be visible. It is the force of the women who speak and work and write, and it is formidable....
>
> ...Through all the centuries of war and death and cultural and psychic destruction have endured the women who raise the children and tend the fires, who pass along the tales and the traditions, who weep and bury the dead, who are the dead, and who never forget. There are always the women...who dance and sing and remember and hold within their hearts the dream of their ancient peoples – that one day the woman who thinks will speak to us again, and everywhere there will be peace. Meanwhile we tell the stories and write the books and trade tales of anger and woe and stories of fun and scandal and laugh over all manner of things that happen every day. We watch and we wait.[66]

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[47] Ibid. p. 9-10.

[48] Ibid. p. 10-11.

[49] Hampton, Eber. (1993) "Toward a Redefinition of American Indian/Alaska Native Education." Canadian Journal of Native Education. 20(2):p. 305.

[50] Ibid. p. 262. Note Chapter 5, Inuit and Dene: Reflecting Inuvialuit and Gwich'in World Views for similar spiral concept for Dene traditional education "spiral learning."

[51] Ibid. p. 289. See Chapter 1, Note 24. "Cycle of Life" is used rather than "Medicine Wheel."

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Chapter 3 – Indigenous Perspectives of Colonialism

We have listened to the words of the Elders, scholars and educators in their expression of an indigenous philosophy and vision, towards teaching and learning, to aid in our understanding of how indigenous people perceive and interact within the world. To further aid our understanding, we will listen to indigenous scholars speak about the experience of colonialism by indigenous people and its impact on people's lives and on their communities.

Concept of Cognitive Imperialism

Marie Battiste, Mi'kmaq educator, and professor at the University of Saskatchewan, notes that not much has changed in the area of native education in Canada since the early 1970's. She professes "Cognitive imperialism, also known as cultural racism, is the imposition of one worldview on a people who have an alternative worldview, with the implication that the imposed worldview is superior to the alternative worldview."[1] The Canadian educational system is viewed "…as the basis of Canadian cultural transmission…." where "…culture, mores, and social values are transmitted to the student."[2] This educational system is seen as an effective force of oppression against Aboriginal children that has "…in a large part, destroyed or distorted the ways of life, histories, identities, cultures, and languages of Aboriginal people."[3] To better understand how the educational system has not served Aboriginal people, Battiste contends that we need to undertake "…a deeper philosophical analysis of modern thought and educational practices."[4]

> "Cognitive imperialism is a form of cognitive manipulation used to disclaim other knowledge bases and values… Cognitive imperialism denies people their language and cultural integrity by maintaining the legitimacy of only one language, one culture, and one frame of reference."[5]

Aboriginal people are invisible in our education system today. "When someone with the authority of a teacher, say, describes the world and you are not in it, there is a moment of psychic disequilibrium as if you looked into a mirror and saw nothing."[6] "Aboriginal languages are the basic media for the transmission and survival of Aboriginal consciousness, cultures, literatures, histories, religions, political institutions, and values.

They provide distinctive perspectives on and understandings of the world."[7] Tribal epistemology is transmitted through Aboriginal language, which imparts a collective cognitive experience based on shared beliefs and common ideals.[8] Elders are seen as critical links "…to Aboriginal epistemology through Aboriginal languages."[9] Battiste contends that, "…to allow tribal epistemology to die through the loss of Aboriginal languages is to allow another world of knowledge to die, one that could help to sustain us."[10] "Rituals and ceremonies that cleanse and heal, maintaining balances, must be respected and honoured."[11]

Battiste recommends "the federal government should provide adequate resources to First Nations to ensure the development of language structures, curriculum materials, First Nations language teachers, resource centres, and immersion programs"[12] with Aboriginal education remaining "…outside the arena of provincial administrative regulations."[13] Battiste makes a number of recommendations including the development of a network of regional curriculum centres for Aboriginal languages. Effective solutions require major changes which may be brought about by First Nations governments and include the use of Aboriginal languages in communities and the hiring of Aboriginal people based on merit. The application of collective values fostered toward a collective consciousness leads to collective healing and collective goals.

Jagged World Views

Leroy Little Bear, an indigenous scholar and member of the Blood Tribe of the Blackfoot Confederacy, professor emeritus of the University of Lethbridge, attempts to show how Aboriginal worldviews differ from those of the dominant European worldview imposed upon us through colonialism. Our worldview allows for alternative ways of interpreting the world. Colonialism is seen as functioning to suppress diversity thereby creating oppression and discrimination.[14] Little Bear considers that,

> "culture comprises a society's philosophy about the nature of reality, the values that flow from this philosophy, and the social customs that embody these values. Any individual within a culture is going to have his or her own personal interpretation of the collective cultural code; however, the individual's worldview has its roots in the culture – that is, in the society's shared philosophy, values and customs."[15]

Although Little Bear's articulation of an Aboriginal philosophy is derived from the Plains Indians, he considers that the philosophy may be applied to those of other Aboriginal groups in North America.

> "Existence consists of energy. All things are animate, imbued with spirit, and in constant motion. In this realm of energy and spirit, interrelationships between all entities are of paramount importance, and space is a more important referent than time....
>
> The idea of all things being in constant motion or flux leads to a holistic and cyclical view of the world. If everything is constantly moving and changing, then one has to look at the whole to begin to see patterns... Constant motion, as manifested in cyclical or repetitive patterns, emphasized process as opposed to product. It results in a concept of time that is dynamic but with without motion. Time is part of the constant flux but goes nowhere. Time just is....
>
> Language embodies a way a society thinks. Through learning and speaking a particular language, an individual absorbs the collective thought process of a people. Aboriginal languages are, for the most part, verb-rich languages that are process - or action-oriented. They are generally aimed at describing "happenings" rather than objects. The languages of Aboriginal peoples allow for the transcendence of boundaries....
>
> There is no animate/inanimate dichotomy. Everything is more or less animate.... If everything is animate, then everything has spirit and knowledge. If everything has spirit and knowledge, then all are like me. If all are like me, then all are my relations....
>
> In Plains Indian philosophy, certain events, patterns, cycles, and happenings take place in certain places. From a human point of view, patterns, cycles, and happenings are readily observable on land: animal migrations, cycles of plant life, seasons, and so on. The cosmos is also observable, and patterns are detected from a particular spatial location within the territory of a particular tribe. Tribal territory is important because Earth is our Mother (and this is not a metaphor: it is real).[16] The Earth cannot be separated from the actual being of Indians. The Earth is where the continuous and/or repetitive process of creation occurs....
>
> Creation is continuity. If creation is to continue, then it must be renewed. Renewal ceremonies, the telling and retelling of creation stories, the singing and re-singing of the songs, are all humans' part in the maintenance of creation....
>
> All of the above leads one to articulate Aboriginal philosophy as being holistic and cyclical or repetitive, generalist, process-oriented, and firmly grounded in a particular place."[17]

"Aboriginal traditions, laws, and customs are the practical application of the philosophy and values of the group."[18] Aboriginal social organization is structured like a "spider web" of relations with the extended family being the central unit coming together to form bands, tribes or nations. Religious and social communities may also maintain kinship relationships. A holistic perspective is related to wholeness, which is comprised of "strength, sharing, honesty and kindness" which come together to form "balance, harmony and beauty."[19] The values are interconnected to sustain balance, functioning to elicit the attainment of harmony and beauty by individuals who, in turn, strengthen the community. The principles of non-interference[20], sharing, and humour also contribute to the attainment of balance, harmony and beauty. Honesty and kindness serve as positive social controls serving to foster and maintain balance, harmony, and beauty. Each being is expected to report events in the manner he or she experienced them, sharing his or her truth. The custom of collective decision-making is important to the Aboriginal community and to decision-making processes "...governing external relations, the utilization of resources, movements within Aboriginal territory, and the education of the younger generation."[21] Little Bear offers,

> "The function of Aboriginal values and customs is to maintain the relationships that hold creation together. If creation manifests itself in terms of cyclical patterns and repetitions, then the maintenance and renewal of those patterns is all-important. Values and customs are the participatory part that Aboriginal people play in the maintenance of creation"[22].

Aboriginal philosophy, values, and customs are taught through language, storytelling, role modelling, and learning by actual experience. Socialization is achieved by "praise, reward, recognition and renewal ceremonies...." and "...children are seldom physically punished, but they are sternly lectured about the implications of wrongful or unacceptable behaviour."[23] The education of a child, who is considered as a gift from the Creator, is a collective responsibility.

Little Bear considers a Eurocentric worldview to be in opposition to an Aboriginal philosophy. Time is composed of linear units and society is structured hierarchically with individuals possessing a greater degree of status than the communal whole. Thinking is static, most often occurring in isolation within an artificial environment. Objectivity is based on physical observation and measurement achieved through externalization with an emphasis on materialism and concerned with quantification. These implicit assumptions "...are the guidelines for interpreting laws, rules, customs, and actions."[24] These assumptions form the basis for our perception of the way the world is.

In Aboriginal societies, the law is "...the philosophy, the values, the customs....Law is not something that is separate and unto itself. Law is the culture, and the culture is the law."[25]

An internalization of knowledge leads to the acquisition of implicit "collective agreements" or "behavioural codes" held by all towards the attainment and maintenance of balance, harmony and beauty and welfare of the group.[26] An ideal personality within Aboriginal culture is an individual who is strong physically and spiritually, generous and kind to all; someone who puts the groups needs' above individual wants and desires; a generalist with survival skills and wisdom; a person with spiritual and ritual knowledge; friendly, easy-going, with humour and good feelings; who suppresses inner feelings, anger, and disagreement with the group; who displays bravery, hardiness, and strength; and who is adaptable and takes the world without complaint.[27]

Little Bear considers colonization to have created jagged worldviews within Aboriginal people where "...Aboriginal consciousness became a site of overlapping, contentious, fragmented, competing desires and values."[28] Attempts made to destroy the Aboriginal worldview through the educational policies of colonialism have failed. However, the jagged worldviews function to minimize cultural and social controls allowing for external forces to act as social controls. Little Bear contends, it is "...this clash that suppresses diversity in choices and denies Aboriginal people harmony in their daily lives."[29]

Colonialism at the Subjective, Social and Spiritual Levels

What happens when a people experience colonization? How does it impact on the health and well being of individuals and their communities? In her essay, "Unfolding the Lessons of Colonization" Professor Marie Battiste relates, "We came to understand that it is the systemic nature of colonization that creates cognitive imperialism, our cognitive prisons."[30] Erica-Irene Daes, the Chair of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations, in an effort towards understanding colonialism at subjective, social and spiritual levels, discusses the experience of colonization as being brought about by the oppression of the individual who experiences a "spiritual death".

> "We gain wisdom and self confidence from the choices we make on this life journey. For the oppressed, however, a stranger is always by their side, blocking their chosen destination, saying to them, 'Not that way.' Eventually, the experience of oppression becomes internalized as an accumulation of implicit, subconscious limitations in freedom. External oppression becomes self-oppression. The victim of oppression travels the road of life thinking at every crossroads 'Not that way,' until the result is immobility, inaction, and self-isolation..."[31]

Daes further states that colonization is achieved using the tool of isolation, which in turn teaches people that their feelings and beliefs are irrelevant. "One of the most destructive of the shared personal experiences of colonized people around the world is intellectual and spiritual loneliness."[32]

Inflicting the Soul Wound

Bonnie and Eduardo Duran, who have authored several books on the subject of post-colonial psychology, reveal the construction of the discipline of psychology to be founded on Western philosophical tradition "...based on binary opposites implicit in Western metaphysics."[33] They consider the term "cross-cultural" to mean that all observations are made based on Western subjectivity. The "...objectification of science is nothing but ongoing social control and hegemony."[34] Given that most western therapists receive training from a western scientific perspective the existing mental health delivery system fails to provide relevant treatment to ethnic populations. Duran and Duran have developed a prevention and treatment model that has had some success within native communities in California. Attempts to integrate Western and traditional approaches to address alcoholism, chemical dependency and suicide have as yet not met with success. Duran and Duran consider "western practitioners are deeply entrenched in a worldview that will not allow for openness outside rational empirical thought processes."[35]

The Aboriginal perception of time is conceptualized in a spatial fashion where "...spatial thinking views events as a function of space."[36] Time from a western perspective is viewed in a linear time sequence where time has a beginning and an end. These alternative perspectives of time are considered as being part of the same continuum. To Duran and Duran, an Aboriginal,

> "…worldview is a systemic approach to being in the world that can best be categorized as process thinking, as opposed to the content thinking found in the Western worldview. Process thinking is best described as a more action and "eventing" approach to life versus a world of subject/object relationships."[37]

Indigenous languages describe experiences and events, using verbs, while Western Indo-European languages describe relationships between objects, using nouns.

A crucial worldview difference is the "non-compartmentalization" of experience in that Aboriginal people experience the world through a "totality of personality". Aboriginal people experience the world where each human being is interconnected in "…a relationship and moving in harmony with the seasons, the wind, and all of creation."[38] A western worldview separates "the mind from the body and spirit and the spirit from the mind and body."[39] The need for healing in Aboriginal communities is attributed to a loss of harmony in the life process. For Aboriginal people, it is the intensity of the therapeutic process that is important to the restoration of the relationship of balance and harmony within the individual. Duran and Duran pose the critical factor in postcolonial psychological theory and practice to be "…a fundamentally different way of being in the world."[40]

It is important to understand socio-historical factors that have effected Aboriginal people. Educational policy, in the form of residential school policies in Canada, is identified as one of the most traumatic socio-historical events "…whose effect was the systematic destruction of the Native American family system…." and "…inflicting a wound to the souls of Native American people that is felt in agonizing proportions to this day."[41] Previously, Native American culture provided a holistic worldview that "…allowed Native Americans to have a unified awareness or perception of the physical, psychological, and spiritual phenomena that make the totality of human existence or consciousness."[42] Through their work, the authors have concluded,

> "The core of Native American awareness was the place where the soul wound occurred. The concept of the soul wound can best be understood as the trauma suffered by the psyche over half a millennium of systematic attempts at genocide directed toward Indigenous peoples. The core essence is the fabric of the soul, and it is from this essence that

> mythology, dreams, and culture emerge. Once the core from which the soul emerges is wounded, much of the emerging mythology and dreams of a people reflect the wound. The manifestations of such a wound are then embodied by the tremendous suffering that the people have undergone since the collective soul wound was inflicted half a millennium ago and continues in different guises even to this day. Some of the diseases and problems that Native American people suffer are a direct result of the soul wound. These self-destructive behaviours may be a desperate attempt to bring back a harmonious soul."[43]

Processes of Colonization and Decolonization

The process of colonization is identified by Professor Virgilio Enriques of Hawaii as a series of steps,[44] beginning with the arrival of the colonizer who denies the existence of an indigenous culture, followed by a withdrawal of cultural practices by some indigenous people. This first step is followed by the destruction or eradication of symbols representative of indigenous cultures. Next, as new systems begin to take over indigenous society, the practice of indigenous culture is belittled, ridiculed and denigrated. New institutions criminalize and replace traditional practices with new literature, legends, symbols and practices. Following this period, surface accommodation and tokenism are accorded to the remnants of indigenous culture through the practice of respect for traditions. By this time traditional culture has been transformed into culture. Some forms of tradition may be permitted into dominant institutions. The support of indigenous causes occurs simultaneously with the exploitation of indigenous people.

In response to Enriques' analysis of the process of colonization, Poka Laenui suggests five phases of decolonization: rediscovery and recovery, mourning, dreaming, commitment, and, action. "The phase of rediscovering one's history and recovering one's culture, language, identity, and so on is fundamental to the movement for decolonization."[45] A time of mourning is seen as an essential phase of healing. During dreaming, "…colonized are able to explore their own cultures, experience their own aspirations for their future, and consider their own structures of government and social order to encompass and express their hopes."[46] Laenui notes it is important to consider the process of developing new political and social institutional controls. One need ask if newly developed constitutions truly reflect the hopes and aspirations, and social and legal culture, of the indigenous people. Or, do they merely reflect a colonial mentality based on a mind-set of western political structures, with the most important question being, were they drafted by the people themselves or written and advised by colonial experts?[47] "Decolonization includes the re-evaluation of the political, social, economic, and judicial structures themselves and the development, if appropriate, of new structures that can hold and house the values and aspirations of the colonized people."[48] After dreaming comes commitment, where a society moves in a single direction based on a clear statement of people's desired direction. Commitment is based on the achievement of consensus and following consensus, action occurs. Laenui considers adherence to the decolonization process to allow people to have "…a participatory role in the formation of their own social order."[49] The process of decolonization is one that both individuals and communities may embark upon and one that may be revisited again and again at different stages and at various times.

It should be noted that the processes of colonization and decolonization are oppositional, or juxtaposed to one another; this is premised on the construct of binary opposition inherent to the western paradigm, and reflective of a hierarchical and "conquerer" mentality[50]. It may also be noted that decolonization begins at the level of individuals and communities who pursue health and wellness based upon a foundation of cultural traditions and teachings. To be cognizant of the concept of "cognitive" colonization allows for change to occur at the level of the individual and within communities, and outside of political processes where an end goal of decolonization may remain ongoing.

Forces of Colonialism

Sakej Henderson addresses the strategies of Eurocentrism, epistemological diffusionism, universality, and enforcement of differences employed by the forces of colonialism. The understanding of these strategies by Aboriginal people is a restorative process towards a reconciliation of knowledge systems. To indigenous people, Eurocentrism:

> "…represents a cognitive force of artificial European thought, a differentiated consciousness, ever changing in its creativity to justify the oppression and domination of contemporary Indigenous peoples and their spiritual guardians. In academic professorate, Eurocentrism is a dominant intellectual and educational movement that postulates the superiority of Europeans over non-Europeans."[51]

Henderson considers Eurocentrism to be "a finely sculpted model, a structured whole," "the colonizer's model of the world," that has evolved into an ultra-theory of diffusionism where the basic framework is one of inside, at the centre of which may be found European thinking, and outside, where the other resides always at the periphery.

"Universality creates cultural and cognitive imperialism, which establishes a dominant group's knowledge, experience, culture, and language as the universal norm."[52] Differences are constructed as being "inferior and negative" where the construct of a "…binary consciousness justifies the separation of Indigenous peoples from their ancient rights to the land and its resources and the transfer of wealth and productivity to the colonialists and the mother country."[53] Since the colonizer sits as an ideal within the centre of the model of Eurocentrism, he is unseen and exists as a standard of perfection allowing him to examine others while adopting an objective voice.[54] To succeed,

> "…colonizers must obscure Aboriginal memory. To strip Indigenous peoples of their heritage and identity, the colonial education and legal systems induce collective amnesia that alienates indigenous peoples from their Elders, their linguistic consciousness, and their order of the world. Only the Eurocentric oppressor is the agent of progress, either by the will of God or by the law of nature. The sum of European learning is established as the universal model of civilization, to be imitated by all groups and individuals. The oppressors' imperatives monopolize history or progress. In the Eurocentric construct of three-dimensional time, whoever masters the present moulds the past."[55]

A strategy of difference was acquired through a shift in the acquisition of knowledge focused on the action of discriminating to establish identities whereby "…discrimination imposes upon comparison the primary and fundamental investigation of difference."[56] Thus, "[r]acism is the generalized and final assigning of values to real or imaginary differences, to the accuser's benefit and at his victim's expense, in order to justify the former's own privileges or aggression."[57] Logical analysis and causal explanation were methods used to perceive categories and make inferences that served as interpretations of or descriptions of, being explanations for. "Colonialists used culture to bring order to nature."[58] Racist strategies used to maintain colonial power over indigenous people are identified as:

> "…stressing real or imaginary differences between the racist and the victim; assigning values to these differences, to the advantage of the racist and the detriment of the victim; trying to make these values

> absolutes by generalizing from them and claiming that they are final; and using these values to justify any present or possible aggression or privileges."[59]

Henderson goes on to say:

> "The colonists created new hierarchies and governments that believed in the absolute superiority of Europeans over the colonized, the masculine over the feminine, the adult over the child, the historical over the ahistorical, and the modern or 'progressive' over the traditional or 'savage'. These artificial political orders reflected ways of thinking that were defined by polarities: the modern and the primitive, the secular the nonsecular, the scientific and unscientific, the expert and the layman, the normal and the abnormal, the developed and the underdeveloped, the vanguard and the led, the liberated and the saveable.[60] Forces sometimes imposed these ideas. These privileging norms released forces within the colonized societies that altered their cultural priorities. Colonization created new worldviews that were self-legitimizing. In this brave new world, through a curious transposition, the colonial dominators called upon the colonized to justify themselves."[61]

The indigenous scholars and educators have shared their insight into the impact of the forces of colonialism on indigenous people. In the next chapter, we will visit the Beaufort/Delta region of the Northwest Territories where some of these forces are being played out today. The Inuvialuit and Gwich'in are struggling to conceptualize a foundation for self government based on their culture, language and traditions. The challenge of the undertaking is that the cultural foundation must reside within the framework and scope of self government negotiations as determined by the Government of Canada.

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[1] Battiste, Marie (2000) "Maintaining Aboriginal Identity, Language and Culture in a Modern Society" in Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision. UBC Press. Vancouver. p. 193.

[2] Ibid. p. 193.

[3] Ibid. p. 193.

[4] Ibid. p. 197.

[5] Ibid. p. 198.

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[6] Rich, Adrienne, "Invisibility in Academie" cited in Renate Rosaldo, (1989) Culture and Truth. Beacon Press. Boston. Cited in Ibid. p. 198.

[7] Ibid. p. 199.

[8] Ibid. p. 199.

[9] Ibid. p. 199.

[10] Ibid. p. 202.

[11] Ibid. p. 202.

[12] Ibid p. 201.

[13] Ibid. p. 201.

[14] Little Bear, Leroy (2000) "Jagged Worldviews Colliding" in Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision. UBC Press. Vancouver.

[15] Ibid. p. 77.

[16] Bullchild, Percy (1985) The Sun Came Down. Harper and Row. San Francisco. In Ibid. Note 12. p. 77.

[17] Ibid. p. 78.

[18] Ibid. p. 79.

[19] Ibid. p. 79.

[20] Ross, Rupert (1992) Dancing With A Ghost: Exploring Indian Reality. Octopus Publishing Group. Markham, Ontario. In Ibid.

[21] Ibid. p. 80.

[22] Ibid. p. 81.

[23] Ibid. p. 81.

[24] Ibid. p. 83.

[25] Ibid. p. 83.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid. p. 83.

[28] Ibid. p. 85.

[29] Ibid. p. 85.

[30] Battiste, Marie (2000) "Introduction: Unfolding the Lessons of Colonization" in Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision. UBC Press. Vancouver. p. xvii.

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[31] Daes, Erica-Irene. (2000) "Prologue: The Experience of Colonization Around the World" in Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision. UBC Press. Vancouver. p. 5.

[32] Ibid. p. 7.

[33] Duran, Bonnie and Eduardo Duran (2000) "Applied Postcolonial Clinical and Research Strategies" in Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision. UBC Press. Vancouver. p. 86.

[34] Ibid. p. 88.

[35] Ibid. p. 90.

[36] Ibid. p. 91.

[37] Ibid. p. 91.

[38] Ibid. p. 92.

[39] Ibid. p. 91.

[40] Ibid. p. 93.

[41] Ibid. p. 97.

[42] Ibid. p. 98.

[43] Ibid. p. 98.

[44] Virgilio Enriques. In Laenui, Poka (Hayden D. Burgess) (2000) "Process of Decolonization." in Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision. UBC Press. Vancouver. p. 153.

[45] Laenui, Poka (Hayden D. Burgess) In Ibid. p. 153.

[46] Ibid. p. 155.

[47] Refer to later sections.

[48] Ibid. p. 155.

[49] Ibid. p. 158.

[50] See Urion, Carl in Chapter 2 and Henderson, Sakej in Chapter 3.

[51] Henderson, James (Sakej) Youngblood (2000) "Postcolonial Ghost Dancing: Diagnosing European Colonialism" in Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision. UBC Press. Vancouver. p. 58.

[52] Ibid. p. 64.

[53] Albert Memmi in Ibid. p. 64.

[54] See also Haraway, Donna.

[55] Ibid. p. 65.

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[56] Foucault, M. (1970) The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences. Tavistock. London. In Ibid. p. 66.

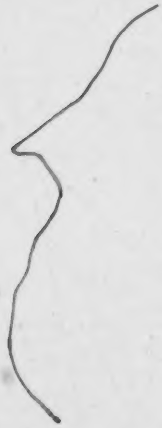
[57] Memmi, A. (1969) Dominated Man: Notes Toward a Portrait. Beacon Press. Boston. In Ibid. p. 66.

[58] Ibid. p. 67.

[59] Ibid. p. 66.

[60] Nandy, A. (1983) The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonization. Oxford University Press. New Dehli. In Ibid. p. 66.

[61] Ibid. Citing Albert Camus. p. 72.



Chapter 4 – Land Claims and Self Government Negotiations

Inuvialuit and Gwich'in: People of the Beaufort/Delta

Inuvialuit and Gwich'in are the indigenous occupants of the Beaufort/Delta region. They have lived in their respective territories for thousands and thousands of years. At the arrival of Europeans in the region at the beginning of the 1800's the Inuvialuit were living in five distinct territorial groups, each named after the largest village (each of these composed of several hundred to nearly a thousand people).[1] Initially, there were ten Gwich'in tribal groups.[2] Osgood documents eight tribal groups, those of the Yukon Flats - *Kutcha*, Birch Creek -*Tennuth*, Chandalar River - *Natsik*, Black River -*Tranjik*, Crow River -*Vunta*, Upper Porcupine River -*Tukkuth*, Peel River -*Tatlit* and Mackenzie Flats - *Nakotcho*.

Inuvialuit live in the Beaufort Sea area of Canada's arctic coastline. They consider themselves to be "the real people." They are known in historical writing as the "Mackenzie Eskimos," and as Inuit. The Inuvialuit of today are the descendents of the Inupiaq, the Mackenzie Inuit, and the Copper Inuit. The Inupiaq from Alaska became know as the *Uummarmiut* or "people of the green trees and willows," after they moved to the Delta region from Alaska at the turn of the last century. Those from the east were Copper Inuit.

The people of the Gwich'in First Nation live in the northernmost region of North America and occupy lands in Alaska, the northern Yukon and northwestern Northwest Territories. The Gwich'in, formerly known as the Loucheux Indians, are considered to be Dene, or belonging to the people of Denendeh, "people of the land", and are commonly referred to in anthropological literature as the Kutchin. The Dene people of the North occupy the Mackenzie Valley region from the northern Mackenzie Delta south to the sixtieth parallel. Several tribal groups are considered to be Dene and include the Gwich'in, Sahtu, Dogrib, Slavey, and Dehcho. Other Dene peoples include Akaitcho, Yellowknives, and Chipewyan. The Gwich'in consider themselves as "the people of" or "dwellers of" the Mackenzie Delta region where the Mackenzie River meets the Beaufort Sea. In the Gwich'in language, "*Dinjii Zhuh*" means "the people."[3]

In the past, the Inuvialuit subsisted on beluga and bowhead whaling, hunting the Porcupine and Bluenose caribou herds, waterfowl, sealing, fishing, and small game. The area held a wealth of sustenance. "Stories tell of hunt which took as many as two hundred whales at once. Despite the large kill, there was no wastage."[4] "During migration, thousands of caribou passed by for days."[5] "For as long as the Inuvialuit remember, the geese had used the delta area as a staging ground."[6] During the summer beluga hunt in 1826, two hundred men in kayaks met the British Royal Navy during a visit to the community of *Kittigazuit* where the population was estimated to number 1000 people.[7] American whalers were the first to trade with the Inuvialuit. Up to fifteen ships could be found during the winter months stationed at Herschel Island off the northern coast of the Yukon. Between 1889 and 1917, the American whalers took approximately 1500 bowhead whales from Canadian waters.[8]

The Gwich'in are people of the caribou and depend heavily on the seasonal migration of the Porcupine Caribou herd to the Beaufort/Delta region. Historically they subsisted on fishing and the hunting of caribou and moose, sheep, waterfowl and small game.

European Contact

Europeans first came to the north in the late 1700's, traveling east along the Alaskan coastline or northward via the Slave and Mackenzie Rivers. These newcomers were whalers, guides, explorers, fur traders, voyageurs, Hudson's Bay Company and Northwest Company men, and missionaries. At that time, the people of Europe were embarking upon the quest of colonization, traveling the globe exploring uncharted waters, seeking new lands, wealth and resources. In the North, European men, of various ethnic origins, married and/or had children with Inuit, Dene, and, mixed-blood women. With these Europeans, came new ideas, new religions, and new ways of interacting with and perceiving the environment. Their families remained among the Inuvialuit and Gwich'in and their descendents continue to live in the Beaufort/Delta region of the NWT today.

First People's Inherent Rights

The following section concerning land claims and negotiations relates and reflects a chronology of events and content that is articulated from the position of the Canadian government[9]. The language and terminology used give the impression the information being provided is valid and truthful, and that history and events have unfolded in the "right way." The information is related following a review of a sampling of pertinent literature to provide a brief overview of events that we have come to learn as representative of land claims and self government negotiations. The perspectives of Aboriginal people, do not, for the most part, appear in the literature.

Today, as First Peoples of the North American continent, the Inuit and Dene people have "inherent rights." These rights have always existed; indigenous people were here prior to the arrival of the Europeans and have been resident on the continent of North American for thousands of years. *The Canadian Constitution Act 1982* recognizes the rights of Aboriginal people although these rights have yet to be defined[10]. However, in the framework of federal policy, inherent rights are interpreted to result in the right to negotiate self government. Although indigenous people are the original inhabitants of the land, they are placed in a subservient position in having to negotiate their inherent rights within parameters as defined by the Canadian government.

Frideres identifies two periods of pre-confederation contact between Europeans and the native peoples of Canada: the first being military influence from 1746 until 1830, and the second period being missionary influence from 1830 until Confederation in 1867.[11] He suggests that "…in general, the treatment of Native Canadians has been based on a single ideology – racism…racism is undeniably the underlying ideology of the manifest policies regarding Native-White relations throughout the history of Canada."[12] The historical relationship between Britain, Canada and First Nations will not be addressed in this work[13]. That relationship distinguishes the British government's strategy to paternally dictate affairs in Canada to maintain alliances with the larger indigenous tribes in the east, and to "civilize," "assimilate," and "isolate" native people and communities, to ensure "Crown control and ownership of Indian lands."[14]

The *Royal Proclamation of 1763*, which was later interpreted as an order meant to signal that any Aboriginal title was to be cleared once lands were found to have significant value, stated:

> "It is just and reasonable, and essential to our interest, and the security of our colonies, that the several Nations or Tribes of Indians with whom we are connected, and who live under our Protection, should not be molested or disturbed in the Possession of such Parts of our Dominions and Territories as, not having ceded to or purchased by Us, are reserved to them or any of them as their Hunting Grounds... We do further declare it to be our Royal Will and pleasure, as aforesaid, to reserve our Sovereignty, Protection, and Dominion for the use of the said Indians, all the Lands and Territories not included within the Limits of our Said Three New Governments, or within the Limits of the Territories granted to the Hudson's Bay Company, as also all the Lands and Territories lying to the westward of the Sources of the Rivers which fall into the Sea from the West and North West as aforesaid... And we do hereby strictly forbid, on Pain of our displeasure, all our loving Subjects from making any Purchase or Settlements whatever, or taking possession of any of the Lands above reserved, without our special leave and License for the Purpose first obtained."[15]

The *British North America Act 1867* allowed for the transfer of the administration of Indian Affairs to the control of the Government of Canada and declared that Indians and the lands reserved for Indians would fall under the exclusive jurisdiction of the Government of Canada. The *Indian Act 1876* later determined the legal definition of who the government would recognize as having "Indian" status, consolidated previous laws applicable to Indians, allowed for the regulation of surrender of lands, the election of chiefs and councils, and, in effect, allowed for the control of Indian people by the federal government. Amendments to the Indian Act in 1924 placed the Inuit, who held no distinct status at the time, under the jurisdiction of Indian Affairs.[16] When development began in the North, the government conducted a census of Inuit who were allotted a 'disk' number. Again revised in 1951, the Indian Act allowed for the imposition of provincial laws and standards on natives and provided for Indian bands to have more control over local matters on reserves.

The lands in the north, known as the North Western Territory and Rupert's Land, were admitted into the Dominion of Canada in 1870 giving the Canadian Parliament full legislative power over these lands. The Order In Council stated "any claims of Indians of compensation for lands required for purposes of settlement shall be disposed of by the Canadian government in communication with the Imperial government; and the company shall be relieved of all responsibility in respect of them."[17] At the same time, the Order acknowledged that Indians had "interest" in the land that the government was claiming. The Manitoba Act of 1870 followed the sale of Rupert's Land by the Hudson's Bay Company to the Government of Canada. It is interesting to note the sale of lands by the Hudson's Bay Company that, in reality, did not belong to them. The Act provided that land be set aside for the Metis or half-breed residents living on the land at the time of the sale. In the absence of available land, scrip was issued "giving the holder the right to receive payment later in the form of cash goods or lands."[18] The administration of scrip claims were grossly mismanaged and many of the Metis left Manitoba moving westward and northward.

Treaties No. 1 through 7 were negotiated during the 1870's, with Treaty 8 signed in 1899 and Treaty 10 in 1906. The provisions of the treaties allowed for reserve lands, monetary payments, clothing to the Chief's and headmen, ammunition and twine payments, and in some, treaties, allowances for schooling and medical treatment. The signing of the numbered treaties in the late 1800's and early 1900's set forth a relationship between Canadian governments and First Nations that dealt with jurisdictions in respect to "dealing with" First Nations.

After the discovery of oil in Norman Wells in 1919, Treaty 11 was signed by the Gwich'in at Fort McPherson in 1921. The treaty was considered by Gwich'in Elders to be a peace treaty. They did not surrender title to their lands. The treaty provided for land for reserves, financial compensation in the form of annuities, harvesting and gathering rights, economic measures being the right to materials to farm, hunting, fishing and trapping equipment, and education through the provision of teachers. Although the treaty was signed, no reserves were set aside and there was no immediate significant impact to the Gwich'in living in the Mackenzie Delta[19] who continued living a hunting and trapping lifestyle.

At the time of treaty making, the Inuvialuit of the Beaufort/Delta region refused to sign an agreement.[20] Following the end of the whaling era, the Inuvialuit turned to hunting and trapping. The arrival of the fur traders and missionaries during the 1800's precipitated the building of trading posts that the Inuvialuit began to use as base camps. In the early 1900's schools and churches began to be built. This meant the people spent more time in the communities where their children attended school and the people gathered to celebrate religious occasions. Many Inuvialuit withdrew from land related activities to participate in the construction of the Distant Early Warning Line (DEW Line), which saw the construction of radar dishes every fifty miles along the arctic coastline. They also participated in the construction of the community of Inuvik during the 1950's and in oil and gas exploration and development beginning in the 1970's.

Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau introduced the White Paper on Indian Policy to Canadians in 1969 proposing equality for Indians in Canada.[21] The National Indian Brotherhood declared they would not be "willing partners in cultural genocide" or be party to "…a policy designed to divulge us of our Aboriginal, residual and statutory rights."[22] In a statement to Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry to Justice Berger in Fort Good Hope in 1975, Dene leader, Frank T'Seleie stated:

> It seems to me the whole point in living is to become as human as possible; to learn to understand the world and to live in it; to be part of it; to learn to understand the animals, for they are our brothers and they have much to teach us. We are a part of this world. We are like the river that flows and changes, yet is always the same. The river cannot flow too slow and it cannot flow too fast. It is a river and it will always be a river, for that is what it was meant to be. We are like the river, but we are not the river. We are human…
>
> Our Dene nation is like this great river. It has been flowing before any of us can remember. We take our strength and wisdom and our ways from the flow and direction that has been established for us by ancestors we never knew, ancestors of a thousand years ago. Their wisdom flows through us to our children and our grandchildren to generations we will never know. We will live out our lives as we must. We will die in peace because we will know that our people and this river will flow on after us.[23]

Inuvialuit Land Claim Negotiations and Final Agreement

Following a period of oil and gas seismic exploration during the 1970's and 80's, the Inuvialuit noticed "…the tundra blanket was torn and twisted away in places along the lines"[24] and that the development activities were impacting on wildlife migration and populations.

> "The Federal Government called our land Crown Land. That meant that the land belonged to the Government. How were we, the Inuvialuit, to make decisions about the use of this land that was not ours? The Government had made the decision to allow oil and gas exploration on the land. It made this decision based on Canada's need for gas and oil.

It did not take into consideration the thoughts or wishes of the Inuvialuit, even though it concerned the land that we had occupied since time immemorial."[25]

...To our people, the idea of government was not very clear at first. Many did not understand that there was a Government behind much of what was happening around us. We watched reindeer being brought to our land. We noticed that when we experienced hard times with hunger or sickness, there was some attempt to help us. Somebody was making decisions to build Inuvik and the DEW Line. Scheduled airplanes began arriving. Our people were introduced to water, garbage and sewage services as more Tan'ngit[26] moved into our land.

With the arrival of the Tan'ngit we noticed that there were more rules to follow. Before the Tan'ngit arrived, there were also rules, but many of these rules came to us from nature. For example, we knew that we must have warm clothing and good tools or we would not survive. Other rules came to us from our elders and leaders, such as obedience to adults, or how to cooperate in a hunt.

Government meant more rules. There were now rules about when we could hunt certain animals and how many we could hunt. There were rules about which of our children should go to school and for how long. There were rules about who could get help and who could not.

We experienced all these things but it was not made clear to us that there was a Government somewhere making these decisions. The rules came to us from outside. We were becoming increasingly aware of how they were controlling our lives.

When the Government offices were built in each of the communities and the people from the south came to work in them, we began to understand the idea of Government. The idea of Government seemed very important to the Tan'ngit. They spent much time educating and involving the Inuvialuit in it.

Once we had learned the ways of government in our communities, we began paying attention to the outside governments. There was the Federal Government in Ottawa, which was our overall government. The Territorial Government, based in Fort Smith, then in Yellowknife, governed the Northwest Territories.

After the governments became established in our lives, there was an increase in the number of industries coming to our land. Resource industries such as the oil and gas companies were particularly noticeable.

As we became increasingly concerned about how our land was being used by the new industries, we learned that decisions regarding the use of our land were being made in Ottawa by the Federal Government. It

> appeared to us, however, that there were few people in Ottawa who were interested in our concerns.
>
> The Inuvialuit realized that in order to control the use of our land, we would have to lay claim to it. After much negotiation with the Federal Government, an agreement was reached regarding our claim."[27]

Because of these issues, the Committee for Original People's Entitlement (COPE) was established by a group of Inuvialuit Elders and younger Inuvialuit familiar with government. COPE was formed as a collective voice to represent Inuvialuit during the negotiation of terms and conditions that would see the Inuvialuit receive certain land rights. Until 1986, land claims were settled by the government through the signing of a Final Agreement that extinguished all Aboriginal rights. In 1986 a task force reviewed comprehensive claims policy and recommended that land claims agreements should recognize and affirm Aboriginal rights, that the extinguishment of Aboriginal rights should no longer be an objective of land claims negotiations, and that the policy should allow for the negotiation of self government.[28]

In 1978 the Government of Canada entered into an agreement with COPE, which defined "Inuk," "...as a member of those known as Inuit, Eskimo or Inuvialuit who claim traditional use and occupancy of land."[29] Contrary to Aboriginal people's inherent rights, Canadian law, derived from British law, assumes the position that Canada was acquired by discovery and settlement, with the *Canadian Constitution Act 1982* recognizing "existing Aboriginal rights" under Sections 25, 35 and 37. "Aboriginal" people are defined in the act as being "Indian, Metis and Inuit."[30] The Canadian Constitution, through the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, offers protection of the rights of all citizens in Canada.[31]

The Government of Canada states,

> "First Nations and Inuit can trace their systems of government back to the beginnings of their oral history. They see their powers of government as essential to their existence. This is what is meant by the inherent right of self government for Aboriginal peoples. The right to govern themselves has always belonged to them, as far back as memory goes."[32]

In the Northwest Territories, the Inuvialuit were the first to negotiate a land claims agreement with the Government of Canada. The Inuvialuit entered into land claims negotiations saying they "...were no longer content with adapting to situations which are not of our making. We want more control over what happens to us and around us."[33] The Inuvialuit Final Agreement of 1984 provided the Inuvialuit with certain guaranteed rights. In exchange, the Inuvialuit agreed to give up exclusive use of their ancestral lands and to extinguish their Aboriginal title based on traditional land use and occupancy.

The Agreement recognized Inuvialuit title to 81,800 km^2 or 35,000 square miles of surface ownership to land, or, the rights to approximately one-fifth of their historical traditional land use area. In addition, the Inuvialuit would assume control over land use and wildlife management including the right to be primary harvesters in the land claim area, the exclusive right to hunt in selected areas, and participate in land use and wildlife management in their region. The agreement recognized the right of Inuvialuit to determine the type of development that would occur in the land claims area, the right to receive rent for land use, and, sub-surface rights to mineral, petroleum and natural gas rights to 1,800 km^2 or $5{,}000^2$ miles of land area. Inuvialuit would be responsible for wildlife management. The agreement included financial compensation payable to individuals, and for programs that would address Inuvialuit economic, social and cultural concerns, and, for the expansion and improvement of business. The agreement also incorporated rights and benefits to Inuvialuit as Canadian citizens.[34]

Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claims Negotiations and Comprehensive Agreement

Negotiations began in 1981 to pursue a single comprehensive land claim on behalf of all Aboriginal people in the Northwest Territories with respect to the Mackenzie Valley in the western Northwest Territories. Although the Dene/Metis had concerns regarding treaty rights, Aboriginal rights and the entrenchment of self government, the Dene/Metis Comprehensive Land Claims Agreement was signed shortly after the signing deadline in April 1990. Later that summer in July, a resolution was passed at the Dene/Metis Joint Assembly in Dettah calling for re-negotiation of the land claim and possible court action concerning Aboriginal and treaty rights. Mackenzie Delta representatives opposed the motion and withdrew from the Assembly, which is remembered as the time the Gwich'in split from the Dene. The Sahtu Dene and the Metis also opposed the motion. Following the failure to ratify the Dene/Metis claim, the Government of Canada would enter into separate negotiations with each of the Aboriginal territorial groups in the Northwest Territories.

The Preamble of the Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claims Agreement (1992) states "The Gwich'in have traditionally used and occupied lands in the Northwest Territories and the Yukon from time immemorial."[35] The Gwich'in signed the Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claims Agreement in 1992. They were the first Dene group to reach an agreement with the Government of Canada following the failure of the Dene to ratify the previously negotiated Dene Comprehensive Land Claims Agreement. The Gwich'in voted on the agreement in the fall of 1992. "Ninety percent of eligible voters cast a ballot and ninety-four percent of those who cast a ballot voted in favour of accepting the agreement."[36] The agreement was given Royal Assent and protected pursuant to Section 35 of the *Canadian Constitution Act 1982*, becoming Canadian law on December 22, 1992.

The Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claims Agreement (1992) included private ownership to the surface of 22, 422 km^2 or 8,658 square miles; with 6,158 km^2 or $2,378^2$ miles with both surface and subsurface rights, and surface rights to 1,554 km^2 or 600^2 miles of surface land in the Yukon. The agreement included recognition of wildlife harvesting rights in the settlement claim area, guaranteed Gwich'in participation in the establishment of decision-making structures for wildlife management and land, water and environmental regulation in the settlement area, the rights of refusal to a variety of commercial wildlife activities in the settlement area, a portion of annual resource royalties in the Mackenzie Valley, and a capital transfer of capped funding over a fifteen year period with which to assume land claims management responsibilities. Within the applicable existing federal and territorial management systems of the Yukon, the Gwich'in would retain harvesting rights and adopt a role in management of their land in the Yukon.[37]

In exchange for these recognized rights, the Gwich'in agreed to cease hunting, fishing and trapping in the Treaty 11 area, except for the defined land claim benefits within the settlement area, Western Arctic Region, the treaty area east of the Western Arctic region, and the Yukon. Treaty harvesting rights in other areas of the Mackenzie Valley will no longer be pursued when the respective land claims of the other Dene territorial groups are settled. Treaty rights not negotiated included annual treaty payments and any education rights.

Aboriginal Title and Extinguishment

In 1973, the Supreme Court of Canada decided "the Aboriginal peoples of Canada have a legal right to those ancestral lands where their title has been neither surrendered nor validly extinguished."[38]. Decisions have also determined,

> "that Aboriginal title to land existed as a legal right prior to the colonization of North America by Europeans. It was not created by the *Royal Proclamation of 1763* or any other executive or legislative act. This means that Aboriginal peoples right to their traditional lands are not derived from European legal systems, which the Europeans had imposed upon them."[39]

Aboriginal people had rights to their lands, their own legal systems and governmental structures."[40] Asch and Zlotkin "believe that at the heart of the differences between the Aboriginal peoples' and government's position are conflicting premises and largely incompatible objectives with regard to extinguishment of Aboriginal title."[41]

A new understanding concerning the settlement of outstanding land claims would change the focus of negotiations toward reconciliation between Aboriginal people and the Canadian government "based on an affirmation of Aboriginal title and rights, according to the principle of equitable sharing of ownership and jurisdiction"[42]. "...Prior to the passage of the *Constitution Act 1982*, Parliamentary acts represented the supreme law in Canada,"[43] and, "therefore, any Aboriginal right derived from common law could be extinguished unilaterally and without the consent of Aboriginal people where an act of Parliament directly contradicted it."[44] Section 35 (1) of the *Constitution Act 1982* requires negotiation with Aboriginal people. However, the wording in historic and earlier land claims agreements states the ceding of, "... all their aboriginal claims, rights, titles and interests, if any in and to lands and waters."[45]

Aboriginal groups assert it was not the intent of Aboriginal people to extinguish Aboriginal rights when historical treaties or land claims agreements were signed. The Aboriginal perspective, articulated by Asch and Zlotkin, holds that Aboriginal title encompasses not only the right to use and occupy ancestral lands, but also the right to self government, and jurisdictional right to make laws. Aboriginal people speak of Aboriginal title "as something which is given to them by the Creator and is dependent on their relationship with the land…it is inherent."[46] When the Europeans came to this land and entered into formal treaties, Aboriginal people understood that the land was to be shared. Today, this position continues to be maintained by Aboriginal people during land claims and self government negotiations but the government's position remains that only the government owns the land and will give back some, or provide a portion of, lands to Aboriginal people. The presence of the extinguishment clause was the reason why the Dene/Metis rejected a proposed Agreement in Principle following ten years of negotiations in the north.[47] In more recent years, others have agreed to the clause, based on the necessity of having a land claim that would allow for Aboriginal people to develop and manage their lands and resources within their territories.

Federal policy considers the goal of comprehensive land claims settlements to "replace uncertainty and to resolve debates and legal ambiguities – the central one being the undefined nature of Aboriginal rights."[48] Aboriginal people are expected to exchange "undefined rights for rights that are defined and certain, with the stated aim of providing Aboriginal parties with significant benefits,"[49] with the end result being at least partial extinguishment of Aboriginal title[50]. Land claims negotiations may address "…land selection, self-government, environmental management, resource revenue sharing, hunting, fishing and trapping rights, and other topics."[51] Federal land claims agreements also allow for the establishment of "…community-based self government regimes on designated lands…," the terms of which must be in accord with "…federal policy on community self negotiations….," and "…must respect existing (Canadian) constitutional principles and be consistent with (Canadian) government practices."[52]

Asch and Zlotkin identify six reasons why extinguishment should not remain a condition for the settlement of land claims:

> "First, an extinguishment clause does not provide certainty to either party. Second, the extinguishment requirement is inconsistent with Canada's constitutional obligations. Third, it is also inconsistent with Canada's fiduciary obligations towards Aboriginal peoples. Fourth, the requirement may violate international human rights standards. Fifth, it has a profound negative impact on Aboriginal parties while providing negligible benefit to the government. Finally, the extinguishment requirement perpetuates the ethnocentric biases of government with respect to the nature of Aboriginal rights and title."[53]

The solution proposed is for the federal government and Aboriginal people to form a new relationship "...founded on principles of justice, mutual respect, and cooperation," with "...a major shift in government policy on extinguishment."[54]

The 1986 Comprehensive Land Claims Policy attempted to clarify rights regarding land and resources to be negotiated between Aboriginal people and the Government of Canada. Negotiations would be conducted with Aboriginal people whose Aboriginal rights and title had not been dealt with under treaty or other legal means and who continued to use and occupy their traditional lands. The Agreements would include arrangements regarding land, financial compensation, non-renewable resource royalties, wildlife harvesting rights, and participation in environmental, wildlife management and self government framework agreements. Indian and Northern Affairs Canada consider land claims settlements as "a way for Aboriginal peoples to obtain lasting protection for traditional land-based interests and, at the same, secure rights and benefits to assist them in charting their own socio-economic development."[55] Once a claim is deemed valid by the Government, both parties enter into an agreement to negotiate a Framework Agreement, followed by an Agreement In Principle and Final Agreement, once signed and enacted into legislation, is followed by a period of implementation.

Both the Inuvialuit Final Agreement 1984 and the Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claims Agreement 1992 extinguish Aboriginal title.

> The Mole was a small creature who spent his life tunneling through the earth and because of this had lost most of the use of his eyes. Yet because he was always in touch with Mother Earth, the Mole had developed true spiritual insight.
>
> The Animal People listened respectfully when Mole began to speak.
>
> "I know where to hide it, my Creator, " he said. "I know where to hide the gift of the knowledge of Truth and Justice."
>
> "Where then, my brother?" asked the Creator. "Where should I hide this gift?"
>
> "Put it inside them" said the Mole. "Put it inside them because then only the wisest and purest of heart will have to courage to look there."

> And that is where the Creator placed the gift of the knowledge of Truth and Justice.[56]

Federal Framework and Scope for Self Government Negotiations

The 1995 Federal Policy Guide to Aboriginal Self Government outlines the Canadian government's approach to the implementation of the inherent right to the negotiation of Aboriginal self government based on the recognition of the inherent right to self government under Section 35 of the *Canadian Constitution 1982*. The goal of the federal government is to:

> "build a new partnership with Aboriginal peoples and strengthen Aboriginal communities by enabling them to govern themselves. Our goal is to implement a process that will allow practical progress to be made, to restore dignity to Aboriginal peoples and empower them to become self-reliant. Aboriginal governments need to be able to govern in a manner that is responsive to the needs and interests of their people. Implementation of the inherent right of self government will provide Aboriginal groups with the necessary tools to achieve this objective."[57]

The federal policy was developed based on a consultation process involving Aboriginal leadership from the national, regional, and community levels, and with provincial and territorial group representatives. The foundation of, and,

> "Recognition of the inherent right is based on the view that the Aboriginal peoples of Canada have the right to govern themselves in relation to matters that are internal to their communities, integral to their unique cultures, identities, traditions, languages and institutions, and, with respect to their special relationship to their land and their resources."[58]

The federal government's position is that the inherent right will be negotiated within the framework of the *Canadian Constitution Act 1982*. "The Inherent right to self-government does not include a right of sovereignty in the international law sense, and will not result in sovereign independent Aboriginal nation states."[59] Implementation of self government is viewed by the federal government to enhance Aboriginal people's participation in Canada.

The *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* will apply to self government agreements so that all people, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, may continue to enjoy equal rights and freedoms and in respect to Section 25 which directs that Aboriginal and treaty rights must be respected.[60]

The position of the federal government in regards to the scope of Aboriginal jurisdiction arising from the inherent right is that "...jurisdiction or authority as likely as extending to matters that are internal to the group, integral to its distinct Aboriginal culture, and essential to its operation as a government or institution."[61] Potential subject areas to be negotiated through either a harmonization of laws, or through Aboriginal jurisdiction, include the:

> "...establishment of governing structures, internal constitutions, elections, leadership selection processes; membership; marriage; adoption and child welfare; Aboriginal language, culture and religion; education; health; social services; administration/enforcement of Aboriginal laws, including the establishment of Aboriginal courts or tribunals and the creation of offences of the type normally created by local or regional governments for contravention of their laws; policing; property rights, including succession and estates; land management, including: zoning, service fees, land tenure and access, and expropriate of Aboriginal land by Aboriginal governments for their own public purposes; natural resources management; agriculture; hunting, fishing and trapping on Aboriginal lands; taxation in respect of direct taxes and property taxes of members; transfer and management of monies and group assets; management of public works and infrastructure; housing; local transportation; licensing, regulation and operation of businesses located on Aboriginal lands."[62]

Primary law-making authority will remain with the federal government and Canadian laws will prevail in the areas of divorce; labour/training; administration of justice issues; penitentiaries and parole; environmental protection, assessment and pollution prevention; fisheries management; migratory birds co-management; gaming and emergency preparedness[63]. The federal government will retain its law making authority in regards to powers relating to Canadian Sovereignty, defense and external relations; and other national interest powers, however administrative arrangements will be considered where feasible.

The federal Government considers that self government will come into effect through mechanisms of implementation that include treaties, legislation, contracts and non-binding memoranda of understanding. They are also prepared to build on existing Treaty relationships. Existing land claims agreements including the Inuvialuit Final Agreement and the Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claims Agreement will adhere to existing terms. The Federal Government is prepared to negotiate self government with groups who have existing land claims.

> "The Government takes the position that negotiated rules of priority may provide for the paramountcy of Aboriginal laws, but may not deviate from the basic principle that those federal and provincial laws of overriding national or provincial importance will prevail over conflicting Aboriginal laws."[64]

Appropriate transition measures will be taken during the implementation of negotiated agreements. The government considers that negotiations must address the rights and interests of the non-beneficiaries residing in the land claims areas through the establishment of mechanisms that allow for non-beneficiary input into decision-making processes. The nature of the federal government's fiduciary relationships with Aboriginal groups will evolve as a consequence of Aboriginal groups assuming control and responsibility for their communities. The Crown's diminished control means the Crown's responsibilities will lessen and should be redefined.

The federal government considers mechanisms ensuring political and financial accountability comparable to those of existing governments and institutions are to be developed and set out in an internal constitution. This would require Aboriginal governments exercising law-making authority to establish transparent processes and procedures. Aboriginal institutions exercising authority must adhere to the principle of transparency and establish appropriate administrative procedures and conflict of interest rules. Financial arrangements are seen as a shared responsibility between federal, provincial and territorial governments, and Aboriginal governments and institutions. Affordable and consistent cost sharing agreements will have to be secured that are consistent with sound public administration. The Government of Canada expects that Aboriginal governments will develop their own sources of revenue.

Aboriginal groups and individuals will continue to be eligible for future federal programs unless the Aboriginal government offers a comparable program. Self government implementation plans will address issues such as activities, timeframes, resources, affordability, efficiency, capital requirements, duplication of services, feasibility and capacity. The Government of Canada states, "There will not be, however, a separate source of funding for implementation and transition costs...,"[65] nor will there be any additional monies provided for program enrichment. Statutory requirements and minimal standards of program and service delivery will have to be maintained.

The federal policy states "In the western NWT, the Government would prefer that the inherent right find expression primarily, although not exclusively, through public government… the creation of completely separate Aboriginal institutions to exercise certain authorities may also be a useful approach."[46] The western NWT is seen as unique in terms of its demographic profile. Many communities have a mixed population, land claims settlements do no normally include the communities, and the recent creation of Nunavut has served to divide the Northwest Territories roughly in half.

The Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs has a mandate to enter into negotiations with Aboriginal people in the Northwest Territories. The government prefers to negotiate within a tripartite process which includes Aboriginal groups, the respective provincial or territorial governments, and the Federal government. It is expected once self governments are ratified by their respective Aboriginal groups, that Cabinet approval will be sought for Agreements In Principle and Final Agreements, and that Parliamentary approval will be sought for self government treaties.

The first comprehensive land claims settled in Canada include the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (1977) and the Northeastern Quebec Agreement (1978). To date, under the Yukon Indians Umbrella Final Agreement (1993) six self government agreements have been negotiated on behalf of the Vuntut Gwich'in (1995), First Nation of Nacho Nyak Dun (1995), Teslin Tlingit Council (1995), Champagne and Aishihik First Nations (1995), Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation (1997), and the Selkirk First Nation (1997). Land claims agreements negotiated in the Northwest Territories include the Inuvialuit Final Agreement (1984), the Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claims Agreement (1992), the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement (1993), and the Sahtu Dene and Metis Agreement (1994).

Territorial Framework and Scope for Self Government Negotiations in the North

The Government of the Northwest Territories' position is that the challenge facing both the Government of Canada and the Government of the Northwest Territories is to negotiate self government that both recognizes and respects the inherent right of Aboriginal people and continues to serve the democratic rights of non-Aboriginal residents of the North within a framework defined by the *Canadian Constitution Act 1982* and *the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.*[67] The territorial government views land claims and self government as tools for change. Although the Government of the NWT has many province-like powers and responsibilities, the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs continues to manage natural resources in the North. Constitutional development in the NWT is ongoing, in consideration that the *Northwest Territories Act* is viewed to be out of date, and will be affected by Aboriginal, treaty rights, land claims and self government. The territorial government considers, "Self government agreements and constitutional development will change the relationships between the federal, territorial, Aboriginal, community and regional governments."[68] Issues concerning ownership and rights to land and resources, authority to regulate development, and the responsibility to provide programs and services are to be clarified within a legal framework, since Aboriginal rights are subject to interpretation of the courts.

In addition to historical, legal, constitutional, economic, and social reasons, social justice is identified by the territorial government as an important reason as to why governments are engaged in Aboriginal rights negotiations. European colonization of North America is seen as having "...been detrimental to the culture and social organizations of Aboriginal people, and to their general well being."[69] The territorial government states that, although the *Canadian Constitution Act*, the principals and policy of inherent rights, and land claims agreements provide the impetus towards Aboriginal self government, it is the negotiation of self government that will determine the future relationship between Aboriginal groups and the government.[70] Because the territorial government does not control non-renewable resources, they are dependent upon financing and provision of programs and services through the federal government. Because "...Aboriginal peoples currently lack the power and resources needed to deal with the social, economic and health issues they face...." it is considered that self government "...will provide essential tools for Aboriginal people to set their own priorities and work out their own solutions."[71]

The Government of the Northwest Territories holds that the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* guarantees individual rights to all Canadians and applies to all governments in Canada, including Aboriginal governments within their respective jurisdiction and authorities. However, both the Charter and the Constitution, and particularly "Section 25, which states that the Charter is not to be interpreted as infringing upon Aboriginal and treaty rights."[72] Both individual rights and collective rights must be addressed in self government agreements. The territorial government considers that new government arrangements must respect the basic democratic rights of all people in the North and who will need to be assured continued access to available programs and services.

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[71] Ibid. p. 8.

[72] Ibid. p. 9.

Chapter 5 – Beaufort/Delta Self Government Negotiations

Northwest Territories and Beaufort/Delta Population Profile

The Northwest Territories covers a 1,171,918 square kilometer area. In October of 2000, Statistics Canada estimated the population of the Northwest Territories to be approximately 42,154.[1] In total, there are thirty-three communities in the NWT. In a document entitled "Aboriginal Self-Government in the Northwest Territories: Our Population Profile" the Government of the Northwest Territories indicates that 48 percent of the population is Aboriginal (Dene, Inuit or Metis) and 52 percent of the population non-Aboriginal. The population of the NWT has increased by 32 percent since 1981.[2] A total of 44 percent of the entire NWT population resides in the city of Yellowknife. Of the total 48 percent Aboriginal population of the territory, 20 percent live in Yellowknife, with the remainder making up half the population in the regional centres of Inuvik, Normal Wells, Fort Smith, Hay River and Fort Simpson. The balance of the total Aboriginal population forms 90 percent of the population in the remaining twenty-seven communities.[3]

In the Beaufort region of the Northwest Territories, Inuvialuit territory extends west from *Qiqiktagyuk*, or Herschel Island, near the Alaska border; along the coastline to the community of *Paulatuuq*, or Paulatuk, east of the Anderson River. To the north is the community of *Ikaaruk,* or Sachs Harbour, on Banks Island, and to the northeast is the community of *Kangiqyuak*, or Holman, on Victoria Island. The people travel on the land as far south as the tree line. In addition, Inuvilauit people form a large percentage of the population in the communities of *Aqlarvik*, or Aklavik, and in Inuvik.

Of the Gwich'in residing in the Delta region of the Northwest Territories, the *Tetl'it Gwich'in* live in Fort McPherson, the *Gwichya Gwich'in* in Tsiigehtchic, the *Ehdiitat Gwich'in* in Aklavik and the *Nihtat Gwich'in* in Inuvik. The Gwich'in people occupy the Delta area south of the Beaufort Sea.

In the Beaufort/Delta region, community populations in 1996 were: Inuvik 3,296, Aklavik 727, Tsiigehtchic 162, Fort McPherson 878, Tuktoyaktuk 943, Paulatuk 277, Sachs Harbour 135, and Holman 423.[4] Approximately 6,842 residents were identified as residing in the Beaufort/Delta region (with the resident population in 1999 close to 8,000 people). Inuvialuit are the vast majority of the population in the communities of Tuktoyaktuk, Paulatuk, Sachs Harbour and Holman. The Gwich'in are the majority population in Tsiigehtchic and Fort McPherson. Mixed populations of Inuvialuit, Gwich'in and Non-Aboriginal live in the largest centre, Inuvik, and in the community of Aklavik which was once the centre for economic and socio-political activities in the region.

Of the total population of the eight communities in the region, 5,551 residents are over the age of fifteen years old with 30 percent of this population reporting having never attended or completed high school.[5] Of the total Beaufort/Delta population, 405 individuals have university degrees, with 290 of those individuals residing in Inuvik.[6]

A total of 2,935 individuals over the age of fifteen reported Aboriginal identity. Of the 2,350 Aboriginal individuals between the ages of 15 and 49 years, 800 individuals, or almost one-third of respondents, have never attended high school.[7] Of those surveyed, 630 reported their living arrangements while attending elementary school to have been at a residential school.[8] Of the 2,315 Aboriginal individuals who reported attending elementary school, only 1,035, or less than half, reported being taught about Aboriginal people at the elementary school level.[9]

For those claiming Aboriginal identity over the age of fifteen years, 935 reported speaking an Aboriginal language.[10] In addition, a total of 2,256 Aboriginal individuals reported participation in traditional Aboriginal activities such as hunting, fishing, trapping, storytelling, dancing, arts and crafts, etc.[11]

In regards to community social issues identified by the 2,935 residents over the age of 15 years claiming Aboriginal identity, unemployment was rated as the number one community problem by 2,350 people.[12] Although 2,165 and 1,550 people respectively felt that alcohol abuse and drug abuse were problems in their communities, 1,925 reported drinking alcohol in the past year, while 1,760 reported smoking cigarettes daily.[13] Family violence (1,685), suicide (1,300) and sexual abuse (1,045) were also felt by those claiming Aboriginal identity to be problems in their communities.[14]

Inuit and Dene: Reflecting Inuvialuit and Gwich'in World Views

Although it is difficult to access contemporary materials written from either Inuvialuit or Gwich'in perspectives, a review of curriculum materials developed with the input of Inuvialuit and Gwich'in educators and Elders for use in Beaufort/Delta schools today reveals the perception that traditional values to have survived through time.

Six Inuvialuit Elders, from the Beaufort/ Delta communities of Inuvik and Holman, worked with Inuit Subject Advisory Committee Members.[15] The Elders participated in the development of the "*Inuuqatigiit* Curriculum from the Inuit Perspective" which articulates the Inuit worldview as developed by Elder representatives from the four regions of Eastern Arctic. The Elders felt the values and beliefs of the Inuit people were being neglected or forgotten – the most important being "…respect for ourselves, for others, and for the environment… [b]eliefs ensure values are practiced, followed, honoured and passed on."[16] Many of the Elders; beliefs are entirely consistent with the words of the indigenous scholars and writers referred to earlier.

There are three Inuit language dialects, Inuktitut, Innuinnaqtun and Inuvialuktun. The *Inuuqatigiit* curriculum was developed "…to create, develop and acknowledge in our students a strong identity and to feel proud of their people's history and traditions."[17] Language is considered to provide a meaningful context for learning. Although Inuit who do not speak the language continue to maintain their values, beliefs and practices, it is felt that elements of their culture contained in their language will be missing. Language has to be spoken at home, at school, and in the community.

Gaining knowledge and wisdom are considered to take place throughout an individual's lifetime. Children learn through observation, through repetitive verbal instructions, and through imitation. Learning primarily takes place within the family where participation and achievement are rewarded with praise and affection. Progressive learning takes place using all of the senses through repetition and practice through to successful completion of a task, instilling a sense of accomplishment and pride in the learner. Learning is meaningful in to day-to-day life and instills a sense of responsibility in the individuals towards family, Elders and community. Learning nurtures the growth and development of children who need fun, laughter and joy in their lives.

Children need to know how people in their community are related to each other and will better relate to people who understand them and their culture.[18] The process of learning is consistently evaluated by individuals, their families, and community members with the expectation that everyone will participate, with the main standard of achievement their personal best. Individuals are encouraged to persist in activities until practice leads to expertise.[19]

The foundation of the *Inuuqatigiit* Curriculum Framework is the strengths of the people, their relationships to other people, their relationship to the environment, and to their beliefs and values. The Cycle of Life includes the Past, Present and Future. The Cycle of Life incorporates the Cycle of the Seasons, Early Fall, Fall, Winter, Early Spring, Spring and Summer. The Cycle of Life also incorporates the Circle of Belonging, which includes Family/Kinship, Community, Regions, the northern Arctic, circumpolar regions and the world[20]. The framework of the curriculum articulates the worldview of the Inuit and should be similar to a worldview articulated by Inuvialuit, with the inclusion of regional specifics. The Cycle of Life incorporates the people, their relationships to each other and the land, the seasons of the earth, and the relationship of the people to the North, the circumpolar north and to other people, cultures and places. All are interconnected.

An educational representative of the Gwich'in worked with two Gwich'in Elders[21] and Dene educators and Elders from six communities in the Northwest Territories in the development of the "*Dene Kede* Curriculum" which was designed to articulate a Dene world view to assist students "…in the process of becoming capable Dene."[22] The Gwich'in language belongs to the Northern Athapaskan linguistic family. All categories of learning expectations for the *Dene Kede* curriculum address the development of relationships with land, people, spirit, and self. These relationships are expected to occur "…with the aid of the Dene language" in recognition that "…relationships are best developed with the aid of Dene elders and their voice which is the Dene language."[23] It is noted that the approach of teaching language for brief periods at school is not effective in teaching the Dene languages in that teaching takes place in isolation away from the experience of culture. Immersion camps are identified as "…the most effective of all land experiences for learning language, cultural skills and Dene perspectives in a holistic and concentrated way".[24] Both the community and parents are expected to participate in the learning and teaching of language and culture.

Traditional Dene education of children was the responsibility of all community members. Key learning experiences are cultural experiences that are holistic, experiential, hands-on activity oriented, experienced through life long learning, skill acquisition oriented, self-paced, and structured experiences dealing with relationships to the land, spirit, with other people, and with the self leading towards a balanced Dene perspective.[25] Throughout a person's lifetime, the stages of learning and evaluation occur in a process of spiral learning[26]. By listening, watching and questioning during cultural exposure, the individual develops self-awareness by reflecting on their cultural experiences, which prompt the sharing of cultural awareness, practice and experience. Oral tradition is considered as the teaching tool used for the transmission of knowledge, values, and beliefs of the Dene from generation to generation.

Categories of learning expectations were developed to assist students of Dene ancestry to develop respectful relationships with the land, with the spiritual world, with other people, and with themselves.[27] Community based education incorporating the *Dene Kede* curriculum attempts to re-connect the education of children with the community and includes Elders who are seen as the primary source of knowledge and wisdom relating to survival skills, historical knowledge, Dene medicine and spirituality, stories and legends, customs and rituals, language and terminology, and values and traditions. Increasing knowledge, skill, and wisdom concerning relationships with the land, people, spirit, and self are integrated within the individual through a series of key experiences through out a person's lifetime.

Beaufort/Delta Leadership Today

The Inuvialuit Regional Corporation (IRC) was established to manage the lands and financial compensation received by the Inuvialuit, on behalf of Inuvialuit, under the control of Inuvialuit. Today the IRC continues to make payments to beneficiaries and Elders. On behalf of Inuvialuit beneficiaries, the IRC continues to focus on the education, employment, training and business development, to initiate the promotion of language, cultural and traditional practices, institute formal mechanisms that ensure government compliance to the provisions of the land claim, facilitate ongoing communication with beneficiaries through community corporations, and, preserve the land claims capital for future generations. A Social Development Program addresses social concerns utilizing Inuvialuit perspective, language and customs.

In 1990, the Mackenzie Delta Tribal Council was established to represent the Gwich'in in the four communities of the Beaufort/Delta region. That same year, during the Annual Assembly of the Mackenzie Delta Tribal Council, agreement was reached to support a Gwich'in land claims agreement. Shortly thereafter, the Government of Canada announced negotiations with the Gwich'in based on the proposed Dene/Metis agreement.

In 1990 the Mackenzie Delta Tribal Council changed its name to the Gwich'in Tribal Council. The Council is made up of an elected Executive and representatives of the Teetl'it Gwich'in Council in Fort McPherson, the Ehdiitat Gwich'in Council in Aklavik, the Nihtat Gwich'in Council in Inuvik, and the Gwichya Gwich'in Council in Fort McPherson. The Gwich'in Tribal Council has a number of subsidiaries and affiliates including the Gwich'in Trust, Gwich'in Land Corporation, Gwich'in Settlement Corporation, Gwich'in Harvester's Trust, Gwich'in Scholarship Fund, Gwich'in Development Corporation, Gwich'in Social and Cultural Institute; and Tloondih Healing Society. A number of boards have been established and appointed pursuant to the land claims agreement in association with the right to participate in the management of wildlife in the Gwich'in settlement area and to participate equally in the regulation of land and water in the Gwich'in settlement area.[28]

The Gwich'in land claim agreement also provided for the negotiation of self government.[29] Under Section 5 of the Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement, the Government of Canada is obligated to negotiate self government with the Gwich'in. Respectively, Section 4.3 of the Inuvialuit Final Agreement guarantees that Inuvialuit will be involved in restructuring public government in the region and be treated equally as other Aboriginal groups in Canada[30].

Beaufort/Delta Self Government Negotiations

The Beaufort/Delta Self Government Negotiations Office was established in October of 1996 to represent the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation and the Gwich'in Tribal Council in negotiating a joint self-government agreement with the Government of Canada. The negotiation process is unique in that the Inuvialuit and Gwich'in have formed a partnership to negotiate self government. Self government is being negotiated within the context of a public government system as preferred by the Government of Canada. Parties to the negotiations include representatives of the Beaufort/Delta Self Government Office, Government of the Northwest Territories and Government of Canada.

Negotiations take place within the framework established by the 1995 Federal Policy Guide that recognizes Aboriginal people's inherent right to self government under Section 35 of *the Canada Constitution Act*. Subject matters for negotiations, jurisdictions for negotiation, and financing for self government are determined by the policy. However, the intent of the self government negotiations process is to "...replace present institutions or their decision making structures with ones that are governed by laws and policies created either by Inuvialuit or Gwich'in, or with Inuvialuit or Gwich'in participation."[31]

Negotiator mandates are determined by the respective negotiating parties and based on the framework and scope of negotiations. The mandate of the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation and Gwich'in Tribal Council is based on principles developed through consultation with Beaufort/Delta Inuvialuit and Gwich'in communities and leadership. Government of the Northwest Territories representatives are guided by the GNWT Western Governance Vision which determines the scope of negotiations under the *NWT Act* which gives the GNWT province-like powers, with the legal authority of a territory being delegated by the Government of Canada.[32] Respective negotiating party mandates are not shared with other parties.

Subject matters being negotiated include: Inuvialuit and Gwich'in governments (accountability, legal status and capacity), culture and language, housing, education and training, social, health, child welfare, guardianship, trusteeship and adoption, economic development and tourism, administration of justice, location of government infrastructure, including programs and services, wills and estates, roads and traffic, implementation of plans and financial arrangements, review and amendment, and, transition from existing to future institutions.[33] These subject matters do not include negotiations concerning how Aboriginal groups want to relate to the Canadian governments.

Self Government Community Consultation

Development of the Federal Policy Guide for Aboriginal Self Government was based on "...a broad-based consultation process which involved representations from Aboriginal leadership at local, regional and national levels."[34] Aboriginal community participation in the self government negotiations process is the responsibility of Aboriginal leadership and organizations who are required to maintain and support negotiators throughout the negotiation process. Any disputes concerning representation that may arise during negotiations "within or among Aboriginal groups should rest with the Aboriginal groups concerned."[35] Municipalities and third parties will also have opportunity to offer input during negotiations. The government is committed to working together with the respective parties "to develop appropriate consultation mechanisms for municipalities and third parties that may be directly affected by self-government negotiations and agreements."[36]

Community participation and consultation was undertaken by COPE, the Committee for the Original People's Entitlement, prior to and during negotiations of the Inuvialuit Final Agreement (1984) on behalf of the Inuvialuit. COPE fieldworkers visited the Inuvialuit people in their homes to provide them with information concerning the negotiations and to answer questions. All of the Inuvialuit hunters were interviewed concerning their ancestral hunting territory and hunting practices. A detailed and extensive mapping project was undertaken. For the Inuvialuit, "COPE became the collective voice of the Inuvialuit. Our people had not spoken as one voice since the loss of our traditional leaders."[37]

The COPE materials, housed at the Northwest Archives, consist of 800 sound cassettes and 1.2 m of textual material gathered during the 1960's and 1970's.[38] Inuvialuit, Gwich'in and North Slavey Elders were interviewed concerning their life experiences as part of a project initially developed to gather research material to be used in communities for educational curriculum development, to document the life stories and legends of Elders, and to promote native language literacy. Elders were to be provided with a small renumeration when their recording was broadcast on CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) radio. A majority of the recordings are in the Inuvialuktun, Gwich'in and North Slavey languages.

The Gwich'in Tribal Council, representing the Gwich'in, holds a General Assembly each year to address current issues and bring together the leadership of the Gwich'in communities. Special Assemblies are held as needed. Beginning in 1988, the Gwich'in of the NWT, Yukon and Alaska gathered together and established the first bi-annual Gwich'in Gathering of the Gwich'in First Nations of the north to discuss trans-boundary issues of common interest (such as the status of the Porcupine Caribou herd). When land claims negotiations began in 1990, the Gwich'in Tribal Council established a Community Fieldworkers Program to provide people with information concerning the negotiations process and contents of the completed sub-agreements.[39]

During self government negotiations, the Beaufort/Delta Self Government Office represents the interests of both the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation and the Gwich'in Tribal Council. The Beaufort/Delta Self Government Office initiated a unique approach to community consultation during the self government negotiations process. Dialogue within and between communities and negotiators was seen as central to shaping a negotiated agreement to meet the expectations and aspirations of the Inuvialuit and Gwich'in. Should self government become a reality, Inuvialuit and Gwich'in will assume and exercise control, responsibility and accountability for municipal, territorial and federal powers at the community level within the context of public government. Community development is seen as "…a fundamental aspect of, and precursor to, self government."[40]

A framework of community development was employed towards aspirations that ongoing training and experience would prepare Inuvialuit and Gwich'in community members to assume responsibility for community development during and following the successful negotiation of a self government agreement. The fieldworkers would be familiar with the framework, process and content of the negotiated terms for self government. A fundamental challenge to the negotiations process was identified to be the incorporation, promotion and enhancement of Inuvialuit and Gwich'in culture and language within the context of the requirements of a public government system. The philosophy adopted by the Beaufort/Delta Self Government Office was to adopt a dialogue that "…would recognize the central importance of the Inuvialuit and Gwich'in cultures to self government, and promote community participation and individual skill building."[41]

The goals of community development included the adoption of a participatory action research methodology to determine community cultural values for use in new governing institutions, fieldworker training and skill building, and contributing to the planning of a community development training program at Aurora College, a territorial post-secondary educational institution. In addition, the office would undertake traditional governance research.[42]

Several approaches were employed during the community consultation process, and towards community development, including development of a Fieldwork Program, conduct of a survey of Beaufort/Delta households and residents, facilitation of community workshops on self government, bringing together community justice committees for regional workshops, conduct of a traditional governance community fieldwork research project, community development training, and, ongoing communication of the status of self government communications to Beaufort/Delta residents.

By the fall of 1997, negotiations for a self government agreement in the Beaufort/Delta region had progressed to the point where proposed preliminary governing structures for the region were ready to be communicated to Beaufort/Delta residents. Negotiators had to access resident feedback at this important stage of the negotiations process. Two approaches were explored, the first, to propose separate Inuvialuit and Gwich'in governments. These Inuvialuit and Gwich'in governments would also be separate from the existing public system. The second approach suggested the implementation of a combined Inuvialuit/Gwich'in/Public system of government. The existing public government system would be modified to accommodate changes to programs and services that would fall under the jurisdiction of Inuvialuit and Gwich'in governments. A combined approach would require the formation of both regional and community levels of government.

Arrival in the Beaufort/Delta

It came to me one day, that I would have an opportunity to visit the Beaufort/Delta region in the Northwest Territories. The flight north is long, blue skies extend upward and outward over the swirling exquisite beauty of the land of rock, lichens, wind and water. During my first visit, my host is a woman in *Tsiigetchic*. I am an unknown visitor. We travel by boat on the Mackenzie River to the mouth of the Peel River where there are several old log cabins. On another day, we pack our gear into an aluminum boat, to travel to her uncle's cabin an hour or so away at Tree River. After we cross the great river, *Dehcho*, she tells me, this is my second time running my own boat. On another day, her uncle brings us down the river in his wooden scow to visit the people who are drying fish at their fish camps, good boat. In the early morning the river is still. Two eagles fly by.

It is the time of the Gwich'in Gathering. Gwich'in from Alaska, Yukon and the Northwest Territories are gathering over four days in Fort McPherson. I am asked to help out and each day I draft resolutions at the Annual Assembly. I am taken on a boat ride past Shiltee Rock to visit the T'hlondee Healing Camp on the Peel River. At the night the Gwich'in dance, and, oh! – they dance. More than fifty couples, in a circle, led by a conductor who orchestrates their movement in the intricate patterning of the "old time dance," to the woven melodies of the fiddle. The music rises and falls, pulling the circle round and round, men and women circling clockwise and counter-clock wise, linking hand to hand, swirling and twirling, dust from the arena floor rising to meet the ceiling lights. The backs of the men are straight and proud and the women are smiling and laughing. They dance and dance and dance into the night. There are many Elders present. They sit and visit with their friends and relations. There are feasts in the evening. Each day, someone is brought to me, or comes up to me and touches my shoulder or my arm, and says, we are your relatives, and they tell me how we are related. People say I look like so and so. I see my eyes and features reflected back at me in one of the fellows.

Reflections on the Survey-Based Process

Later, it came that I would be working in the Beaufort/Delta region, with the Beaufort/Delta Self Government Office. In preparation for the work, I attend a self government negotiations meeting in Yellowknife. The negotiating parties represent the Government of Canada, Government of the Northwest Territories and its various departments, and the Inuvialuit and Gwich'in people. The Beaufort/Delta negotiating team is outnumbered by at least four to one. The negotiating parties are seated at tables opposite one another around the room. On occasion, tension rises, but for the most part, all are focused on the words written on the many pages bound in the many, many binders that sit upon the tables. On the first day there are no Aboriginal negotiators in attendance. On the second day, there is an Aboriginal representative at the meeting who unequivocally states the inherent rights of Aboriginal people will not be compromised. I breathe a sigh of relief.

For this trip, I drive up. It takes four days to travel the Yellowhead Highway from Edmonton to the Alaska Highway, through the many mountain ranges, to reach the Dempster Highway and onward to Inuvik. It was fall in the south, with the leaves on the trees just beginning to turn. Through the days, the colours of the land changed, from green to golden yellow, burnt orange and rust. The famed Dempster is a narrow line carved upon the valley plain between the mountain ranges where the Porcupine caribou herd has lived for as long as we cannot remember and we do not know. There are sections of the road in the valley lined with posts more than fifteen feet high to mark the road for people who are driving in the drifting snow during the winter months.

In the Beaufort/Delta region, the Delta lands shift from treed hills and rivers onto the flatness of rocky barren lands with the only exception, slight rises in the earth. As the land flattens into the Beaufort Sea area, we are greeted by the presence of earth eruptions called "pingo's" which celebrate the entrance to a vast area known as tundra. At the top of the world, patches of trees persist at the rivers, near rocky hills and outcrops. They grow in the midst of lichens and mosses standing sentinel in full blue moonlight, in between the sheer sky blue pink radiance of the dawn dusk light, and, in winter, under the spinning irradiance of the northern lights dancing in the dark season.

I arrived in the fall of 1997, at the beginning of a three week training workshop attended by twenty-four Community Fieldworkers from the eight communities of Inuvik, Aklavik, Tsiigehtchic, Fort McPherson, Tuktoyaktuk, Sachs Harbour, Paulatuk and Holman. Inuvialuit and Gwich'in. These are people from the communities. They have lived in their communities for all of their lives and their families have lived in the region for all of their lives. Prior to the move into communities, the Gwich'in and Inuvialuit lived on the land for more generations that we can ever know. Some continue to live a traditional lifestyle on the land in between periods in the community. Some do not. Some are fluent speakers of their languages, others understand their languages when spoken, but cannot speak. Others know only English. Some have finished or gone to high school, others have not. Two of the Fieldworkers have completed university level coursework. All have experienced the land claims negotiations process. They asked hard questions about land claims and self government. They know their politics.

During the first two weeks of the workshop, the instructor stands at the front of the room, teaching coursework concerning Northern government issues. The Fieldworkers sit in the chairs at the tables and listen. Oftentimes they interject with questions and consistently bring up their respective land claims in relation to the self government negotiations process. Yes, but what about this? What about that? This is what it is like in my community... They became immersed within the intricacies of the sociopolitical legal frameworks and systems of the federal, provincial, territorial and municipal governing structures; the *Canadian Constitution Act and Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, parliamentary systems, procedures and law making authorities; divisions of power; and fiduciary responsibility[43]. No one mentioned colonization. Their history is missing.

The challenge was to prepare the Fieldworkers to communicate the status of negotiations to residents in the communities, to translate and interpret legal political terminology to Inuvialuit and Gwich'in language speakers. Although some of the Fieldworkers are fluent in their languages, in response to my inquiry as to the translation and interpretation of English and Inuvialuktun and Gwich'in languages, one of the Fieldworkers advised it is no longer necessary for Inuvialuit and Gwich'in to learn their languages given that everyone in the region speaks English[44]. They would access translators when necessary. There was no discussion about language and culture outside of the context of the government's framework for self government negotiations.

Near the end of the workshop, one of the Fieldworkers requested clarification on the concept of "inherent rights." They worked together in small groups, each contributing their understanding of the meaning of the term. Together, their words described the meaning of the concept so that everyone felt comfortable talking about the subject. It seemed a challenging task for the Fieldworkers to discuss public government with residents. It seemed a heavier task to be involved in the negotiation of the inherent rights of Aboriginal people although we distinguished it was the inherent rights of Inuvialuit and Gwich'in that were being negotiated. No one mentioned extinguishment.

The Fieldworkers considered the issue of guaranteed representation[45] for Inuvialuit and Gwich'in at the regional level of government to be important. Historically, non-Aboriginal residents were elected to represent the region. The Fieldworkers considered it to be important that Inuvialuit and Gwich'in represent Inuvialuit and Gwich'in people. Although the idea of separate Inuvialuit and Gwich'in governments was referred to as an option for self government, there was no information at that time concerning what an Aboriginal government in the region might look like.

The term "non-beneficiary" was chosen to identify those residents who were "non-Aboriginal" in consideration that the term might be construed within the region as indicative of the exclusivity of Inuvialuit and Gwich'in land claims residents[46]. There is a large population of non-Aboriginal people who now reside in the region, primarily in the community of Inuvik, who are employed in the provision of government programs and services in the region. We could not say the non-beneficiaries were white people, or people from other places, as this would be offensive. In consideration that self government negotiations are taking place within the context of land claims agreements, non-Inuvialuit and non-Gwich'in residents were considered as being non-beneficiaries in the land claims area.

Over a five month period, the Fieldworkers visited a total of 1,493 households in the region.[47] Winter is a time in the Beaufort/Delta with many people going out on the land, traveling, or attending to their many roles and responsibilities in relation to their employment or communities. The winter months are also a busy time for government related activities. However, the Fieldworkers persevered, entering into periods of intense activity punctuated by times when there was minimal activity. It proved to a difficult task, to knock on the doors of residents and gain entry into people's homes to relate the status of self government negotiations. There were times, particularly in Inuvik, where the Fieldworkers had to entertain the perceptions of non-beneficiaries who voiced their opposition to the concept of self government, sometimes in insensitive ways.

It also became awkward for some of the Fieldworkers who were perceived as being representative of the Beaufort/Delta Self Government office and, by association, representative of self government within the existing public system of government. Somehow, our initial intentions became distorted. As Aboriginal people, we each believed in our rights to self government and self determination. We respected each other and enjoyed working together and achieving our goals. Yet, it seemed as though we had become a part of a process that was not of our making, and that our participation in the process was somehow fundamentally flawed. Although we were participants, it was an outside process within which we had become agents and actors limited by outside forces. There are opportunities where one may work from inside and make a contribution to one's community, however working within the scope of this framework left little space.

Residents have become somewhat weary of negotiations over the past twenty-five years with some viewing the process with skepticism in that there has been minimal tangible change since the signing of land claims, although there is another level government, being Inuvialuit and Gwich'in land claims organizations. Many have grown up listening to the dialogue of negotiations in their communities where positions are strongly stated, particularly when there is much at stake. Oftentimes it seemed as though social discourse became framed within a negotiations discourse, although there seemed always to be an underlying intent to reach agreement and work together.

Although the issue of personal health and wellness was discussed and stressed at the workshop, many felt the status of their own personal health and wellness did not relate to their responsibilities as Fieldworkers in their communities. Although people recognize substance abuse to be problematic in their communities, the use of substances remains a socially acceptable form of behavior for a majority of residents. Although some Fieldworkers understood they would be perceived as role models in their communities open discussion relating to substance use and abuse at the level of the individual was considered as being inappropriate, unnecessary, and personally invasive of an individual's autonomy. However, substance abuse did become somewhat problematic over the course of the Fieldwork Program. Although there were some difficulties encountered by some individuals, all of the Fieldworkers came through in fulfilling their initial commitment to the Fieldwork Program to do their best.

A problematic area arose during the compilation and analysis of survey data concerning written comments provided by residents in the survey[48]. During the development of the survey at the Fieldworker training workshop, it was considered necessary to offer anonymity to residents in order to access their feedback. In assuring survey confidentiality, residents would feel comfortable in providing feedback. It was felt residents might not provide comments in the event a respondent might be identifiable based on their feedback. While it did prove to be the case that a few individuals with high status were identifiable by their comments, the guarantee of confidentiality and anonymity prevented sharing comments with communities, and had the effect of silencing people's voices and minimizing awareness of both oppositional and complementary attitudes within the region.

Completion of the survey was considered to have been a successful undertaking yielding tangible results. The Community Fieldworkers rose to the challenge in learning and communicating the status of negotiations to community residents. The negotiating parties were provided with a mandate to continue negotiating self government on behalf of the residents of the Beaufort/Delta. The Fieldwork program was successful in bringing Inuvialuit and Gwich'in to work together in a fairly transparent process, achieving "strength through partnership"[49].

In working together on behalf of both the Inuvialuit and Gwich'in and we each committed to the attainment of a vision from the past, towards self government and self determination. We came together by working together. Yet, at the same time, there continued to exist an unacknowledged tension that hinted the community consultation process was somewhat benign, or incapable of, addressing or furthering issues as they related to the needs of the Fieldworkers or the communities. The process seemed to serve the self government negotiations process rather than addressing issues as they arose during the Fieldwork Program, or in response to community issues relating to community consultation. The mechanisms within the process functioned effectively but the linearity of the process served to weaken and limited componential growth, formation of linkages, and expansion into a viable entity to serve Inuvialuit and Gwich'in or communities.

Although the intent of the Fieldwork Program was to serve community consultation requirements, and work towards community development, our energy became focused on project and report completion, thus limiting our capability to enhance the Fieldwork Program to address or serve the needs of the Fieldworkers or communities. Nonetheless, the self government survey conducted by the Fieldworkers yielded resident feedback for negotiators. Residents identified tangible goals for Beaufort/Delta leaders and negotiating parties to address during negotiations, with the residents, and in the communities.

Residents identified employment, education, and training as the number one issue in the region. Almost all Inuvialuit and Gwich'in will live in the Beaufort/Delta region for all of their lives. The existing education system has failed to meet the needs of Inuvialuit and Gwich'in. People need to work and they are concerned with employment opportunities for young people in the future. Questions raised concerning employment, education and training included:

- will be there be employment opportunities with self government?
- what new roles and responsibilities would people have?
- will people have the appropriate levels of education and training to access employment?
- will there be mechanisms to ensure people have the appropriate qualifications, skills and abilities to successfully meet the challenges of self government?

A second major issue concerned leadership. Questions included:

- will leaders maintain traditional leadership roles and practice traditional ways of living?
- will leaders practice health and wellness as role models in their communities?

- how will leaders consult and interact with residents and communities?
- will leaders have a strong mind and practice good governance and management?

A third issue, as in any Aboriginal community, related to Inuvialuit and Gwich'in language and culture. People are not happy when they do not participate in land-based activities that serve to "renew" people[50]. Responsibilities in the community, demands on people's time, and lack of resources to go out on the land, have all affected people's ability to participate in land-based cultural activities. People know that language and culture go hand in hand, however thus far there have been minimal solutions towards the teaching of the Inuvialuit and Gwich'in languages, or to ensuring the transmission of traditional knowledge to younger generations and youth. Questions concerning language and culture include:

- how will Inuvialuit and Gwich'in language and culture become a part of self government?
- how will consensual decision-making be achieved at the community and regional levels?
- how will Inuvialuit and Gwich'in maintain their connection to the land and continue their traditional ways of living?
- how will communities attain the degree of health and wellness necessary for self government to work?

Finally, a fourth issue concerned communication. Not only communication of information relating to the status of negotiations, but communication of knowledge generally was identified as important. People would like to make informed decisions, to consider potential options and opportunities, to understand the past, to explore new knowledge and gain a better understanding about what is at stake and what opportunities may exist in the future. Questions concerning communication included:

- when will the land claims become part of the school curriculum in the region?
- how will residents learn about the history of government and of the Inuvialuit and Gwich'in people?
- how will people be educated about self government and negotiations?
- how are the negotiating parties going to be educated about Inuvialuit and Gwich'in culture and language?

Residents raised important issues and presented a daunting challenge to the Beaufort/Delta Self Government Office in light of the federal government's policy on self government negotiations that determines Aboriginal organizations bear sole responsibility to ensure appropriate community consultation takes place during self government negotiations.

Following this initial survey process, we began fieldwork on traditional governance. The structure and timelines for all phases of the research can be found in Appendix One.

Reflections on the Traditional Governance Community Fieldwork Research Process

How to begin to reflect upon the experience of the traditional governance research? Each time I began to write it seemed as though I repeatedly returned to providing a description of a chronological process. There were many things that could not be said. How to speak. I became mute. I entered in a reflective exercise only to find myself within the same descriptive linear process. This is the way it was. This is the way it is supposed to be. This is the right way to do this. Only to return again and again to the fact that important pieces were missing. There was little in the process that led those involved in the undertaking to recognize with clarity of purpose, to re-"cognize"[51], the cultural foundation being sought for self government within a predetermined system that has failed to address or serve the aspirations of Aboriginal people in Canada.[52]

The discourse of epistemology, methodology and pedagogy, participatory action research, situated knowledge, and reflective consciousness of the dialectical for transformative action and social and community development seemed to be far away from the lives of Inuvialuit and Gwich'in[53]. In the discourse of self government negotiations, there is no reference to politics and ethics, history and culture, or colonization. Certainly, there is no acknowledgement of a "soul wound" in the communities although major social issues exist and persist. All are concerned about the youth. If answers have not been found, perhaps the wrong questions are being asked. There is no doubt the answers may be found in Inuvialuit and Gwich'in language, culture and traditions. The challenge becomes to explore ways to allow for what needs to happen to happen.

I do not have the answers. But I may ask questions in a good way. There were so many things left unsaid, that could not said, until finally, I could not speak. I spoke with people about this dilemma and a teacher said to me, if you love someone and you see they're going to hurt themselves, what do you do? I tell them not to hurt themselves, I said, tell why they should not hurt themselves, tell them to look inside to recognize all the good things inside themselves, to have respect for who they are. I tell the teacher the story about the traditional teaching about respect that influenced my own healing journey, to have respect for oneself as a human being.

The fieldwork research process itself seemed foreign and alien and out of place. We completed the project and completed the work we set out to do. The Elders shared their memories and their knowledge with the Fieldworkers. The data was gathered, translated and transcribed, reviewed and analyzed, and put forward to multiple parties, to be rephrased and reshaped into an end-product of the process. This is what we have done, here is a report. Learning does not end, it is an open ended process and needs to be ongoing and continuing. The survey and traditional governance project were only beginning steps in a community consultation process. For effective community consultation to occur, the end result of the negotiations process would have to be Inuvialuit and Gwich'in self government.

There were many struggles throughout project. There were periods of intense learning. The Fieldworkers communicated their understanding of the content and substance of the status of negotiations. They visited and sat and talked about self government to the Elders. How do you speak to an Elder who has lived in the Beaufort/Delta all of their lives about public government? Do you speak about the multiple frameworks, systems and processes that have been developed and shaped and merged into frameworks, structures and processes that originated in from another place over five hundred years ago? What do you say when half the story is missing in the first place? What do they say to us when we are missing half the story?

Talking to Our Relatives

Following is a construct of a hypothetical dialogue representative of the experience of interviewing Elders in one's community. I undertake this representation in a respectful manner to share the interview process with you.

You're speaking to the Elder, and you know them, so you say, my grandfather, my grandmother, Uncle, Auntie, Respected Elder.

I'm working with the self government office. Yes, I have a good job now. I get paid and I can look after my family. Yes, I have to be away from home for three weeks at a time to go to workshops and it's hard for my family. But so and so helps out when I'm gone and I phone home every day to see how things are. I don't really like staying in town for too long.

Yes, I am going to talk to you about self government, you know, the Self Government Office. You know, we have an inherent right. This is our land and we have land claims. I won't talk about the Royal Proclamation, the Indian Act, Confederation, or the Canadian Constitution, Charter of Rights and Freedoms, NWT Act, or municipal levels of government. You know, anyhow. This is how things are going to be with self government. Inuvialuit and Gwich'in are going to take over. Everyone is going to work together. There's going to be a regional level of government and a community level of government. We are going to elect someone from town to sit on a Regional Council. Inuvialuit people will elect Inuvialuit leaders and Gwich'in people will elect Gwich'in leaders. Inuvialuit and Gwich'in are guaranteed to have half the seats on the Regional Council. You know how white people are always elected. Well, now Inuvialuit and Gwich'in are going to be elected to sit on the Regional Council. The people on this Council will elect a leader of the Regional Council. There will be a Community Council here in town. Inuvialuit and Gwich'in will vote for Inuvialuit and Gwich'in leaders and everyone can vote to elect other people to sit on the Community Council. The land claims say the government has to negotiate self government with us. We are going to run things and things are going to get better. The communities are going to look after some of the programs and services the government looks after now. And the regional level of government will keep looking after things like Education and Health Care. You'll still get your pension and your health care.

While you're talking to the Elder about self government, all of sudden it seems as though there's nobody there, as though you're trying to be heard across a gap and the Elder can't hear you. So, your voice gets loud, like someone went deaf. And you begin to feel somewhat frustrated, because you're trying to help the Elder to understand. And the Elder sits there and looks at you. And you keep talking and you even talk a little faster to get it over with. You start to feel embarrassed because your voice is talking faster and louder, and it sounds condescending and even patronizing, and downright rude, and it reminds you of the all the times when a store clerk stood there and raised her voice loud for everyone to hear, and talked like someone was deaf or stupid, and there was only a native person standing there, maybe your relative, waiting for service. And no one says anything. We deny and pretend it isn't real and it'll just go away and don't bother me while I sit at home and watch TV. And you respect Elders, and you even love them, and now look how talking to the Elder about self government turned out to be.

So, now you get to the better part. And you say, I would like to interview you about how you used to live before the government came to the Beaufort/Delta. We're doing a project for self government. We're talking to Elders and asking about how things used to be before the government came. I will pay you an honorarium for the interview. I need you to sign this paper that says your interview will be shared with other people. I'm going to tape record us talking. This is for self government. I can come back some other time or we can do it right now. Are you busy now or should I come back?

And now, you're relieved because you can give her something. And you feel sort of tired. She's been home alone all day and she says, we can do it now.

Grandma, Grandpa, auntie, uncle, Elder, tell me how you used to live before the government came. Tell us how you used to live. Tell us how the people governed themselves? We want to know what your values and beliefs were? That's like things you believed in? What were the laws? Who were the leaders? How did they make decisions? How was it for you when the government came?

It is hard to write about what the Elders say. It is different when you are sitting in their kitchen and they are talking to you. It is different when you have known them since you were a kid. It is different when you know a lot about them and they live next door. It is different when you see them walking to the store.

The Elders Speak

Nobody comes to visit me she says. The house is spotless and there is a big pot of soup on the stove and she offers me tea and soup and feeds me bannock. She talks to me in English and she does this to show respect for me. She wants to help me because I have asked for her help. She says she never went to school but she knows how to read and write but she has trouble understanding those big words they use at the meetings. I am sitting in her kitchen and she talks to me, and she tells me about her life starting when she first came to remember. She brings me right into the story about getting married, and having children. Right there, she says, right there, is where he died. And I look at the couch. If you are respectful, and you are listening and hearing what is being said, you share in the experience of his passing. She learned everything from her parents and grandparents and her aunties and uncles. She chopped wood and hauled ice for water every day. I ask a question, and it interrupts her. She answers the question, and then continues telling her story. I understand it is disrespectful to interrupt so I don't ask any more questions. Nobody brings her ice. That fellow that used to bring ice all the time has died. She likes good water tea, not this tap water that makes you sick. She used to check snares everyday and help out with looking after the dogs. She learned to sew. They used to travel all the time, to the mountains, and the people gathered together in the community during each season. Life was different then, she says, we were so happy. We were never lonely or sad. Not like today, everything has changed. And she talks about the leaders. They looked after Elders real good, she says. She talks about the RCMP and the mission schools. She does not mention the church. Her husband used to work so he was away from home. She talks for about an hour and I ask her what about self government and she says, maybe it'll work if everyone works together. When the tape recorder is off she tells me about her grandson who is having trouble. He won't listen, she says. She's worried about the young people. They don't have anything to do. They don't know anything and they don't speak their language and their parents don't talk to them. They're getting into trouble. They don't even dress warm when they go out in the cold at night. They watch TV and they're bored and they have trouble in school. They should take them on the land and show them what to do, she says. Someone comes to the door and she talks in her language and I can't understand what she is saying. She gives me fish when I leave. I say thank you and I hug her. When I go back to pay her the money, she sends her grandson to go to the store.

And I'm totally exhausted and I don't know why and I've just begun.

When I visit him he sits there in the chair and talks about when he can first remember when he was a boy. His house is spotless and I can see his boots sitting on the floor under the warm clothes hung on a hook on the door. There's a frozen caribou lying on the steps outside, someone brought him, they always bring him, make sure he has meat. And he talks about his family. How his mother died. And his brother died. And he talks about his grandparents who raised him. He learned everything from his grandparents. He chopped wood with a saw and hauled ice to the house every day. He talks about learning to set snares and going out on the trapline by himself when he was boy for the first time. He tells me he went to the Mission School for two years. You weren't allowed to speak your language because they wanted you to learn English. He knows his language but the young people don't speak the language anymore. I interrupt and ask a question and he answers the question and returns to the story. They're trying to bring it back but he doesn't know, they don't talk their language at home and they don't teach little kids. He talks about the land and the animals. He talks about the trapping and the furs. About how high prices are nowadays when before they could buy all the things they needed. It costs so much for everything, no one can even go out on the land anymore. Gas, gas is so much. Gotta have boat, motor, skidoo. Everything. Used to be able to buy everything for cheap. He tells me how many furs he got one year and how much money he made and what he bought. He talks about when they brought in registered trap lines and about the game laws when they were only allowed to kill one moose. One moose for family all year! I interrupt and ask a question and he answers my question and returns to the story. They never used to live in town. They used to go out in the bush. Travel to where the animals were. When they moved to town they gave him a house. Didn't have to pay anything. The government came. He doesn't like the house he's living in, with hot air from furnace and the windows that won't open. Wood stove is better. Makes a person sick he says. People never used to be sick. Used to be healthy. Always busy. Walking. Walking. Travelling everywhere. To the mountains. I interrupt and ask a question and he answers my question and returns to the story. He remembers the Chief. Everyone used to listen. He was very respected and he helped everyone, old people, orphans, families, everyone. Even kids. Nowadays kids are in trouble, don't know what to do. Don't speak their language, don't know anything about the bush. Can't even set trap. Everyone used to get together, have a big feast, have a dance, and meeting to talk about what the people were going to do. He used to work, maybe with the RCMP, the mission, or the school, or on the DEW line, or when they were building the towns, or for oil and gas or the government, but he had to be away from home and the money sure didn't last. If you are respectful, and you are listening and hearing what is being said, you share in his experience. He talks for about an hour and I ask him what about self government and he says, maybe it'll work if everyone works together. They have to agree on things. It'll take a long time but maybe it'll work. He talks for about an hour, and I thank him and prepare to leave. I shake his hand. The house is quiet and he's sitting still and silent in the chair when I go.

And I'm totally exhausted and I don't know why and I've just begun. There's still twenty or more Elders to visit. Now I have to write up a report and tell the self government office what the Elder said.

Writing Up the Words of the Elders

The words are spoken into a tape recorder. Their words are interpreted and translated from Inuvialuit or Gwich'in into English[54]. Someone else may have translated their words into English. The English is transcribed onto paper. It might take up to eight hours to transcribe one tape. There are a hundred cassette tapes. Write what they said in less than fifty pages. The interviews had to be read and thematically analyzed, deconstructed, and reconstructed to meet the project goals. What were the principles, traditions, values and beliefs of traditional governance?

The words of the Elders are to be respected. They have shared their stories of their lives with us. I must be honest and true and respectful of their words and stories. These stories are their lives.

As the Fieldworkers began completing their work, they said, the Elders are saying the same thing. They are talking about how they used to live and about how the government came. They say there were no laws. They do not know what laws mean when we ask them what the laws were before. The law is the RCMP. They don't know anything about beliefs. They don't know what values are and I try to tell them but it's hard. It's hard for me to tell them about values. They went to the mission school. They talk about losing their language. And they talk about the Youth. They keep saying the same things. They don't know any laws. We're supposed to be talking about self government.

And then the Fieldworker goes out, jumps on his skidoo, and goes out hunting caribou, polar bears, or muskox, or checks nets or sets snares. And he brings me some meat so I won't be hungry. I eat caribou all winter and I'm strong and healthy and I don't get cold.

So what were the Elder's saying? They talked about the land and the animals, and how they lived up into the early 1960's in the Beaufort Sea and Delta region and up into the late 1960's in the eastern Beaufort region. Their earliest memories started in the 1920's. But the RCMP and the missions and the churches were already there. They talk about their relatives and the many Elders who died from the flu epidemics and tuberculosis, and the people in the communities who are dying from cancer. They talk about being sent away from home when they were children to the mission schools, some for a short time, others for ten years. The ones who stayed for a short time kept their language and learned to read and write their names and do arithmetic. The ones who stayed for a long time didn't know their relatives when they got home and they could not speak their language. Some say it was good they went to school and they didn't mind it. Others don't say very much. Those who know, speak of the roles of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in bringing people supplies. The RCMP and the teachers sometimes helped to care for the sick. The priests and ministers helped the people and gave them food. They taught them about God and before that they didn't know anything about religion. There used to be Shaman who healed the sick. They walked and they traveled from place to place through the seasons of the years. And they gathered together and talked, told stories, played games, and sang and danced. They caught their first seal. They snared their first animal. And you never touch a man's hunting things.

Their concern is for the Youth. What is to become of the Youth? They say we are losing our grandchildren. They don't know who they are. They do not know how to survive. Their parents do not know their languages. They do not talk to their children. They don't know how to dress. They don't go out on the land. They don't how to set snares, and fish and hunt and trap. They say they are bored, always bored, watching television, walking around. And they don't want to learn. They don't like going to school. They are bored, bored, always bored. What kind of jobs are they going to have with self government?

I need to include the words of the Elders in this report. I begin to edit transcripts. I cannot break their words into pieces. I cannot cut them up. I cannot impose my thoughts and the way I speak and see things into their words. I must be respectful. Each of their stories must remain whole. The words must be put into a report. The words of the Elders cannot be brought back to the community. The words of the Elders cannot be given like this to the government. The words sound like the people come from ancient times and must be made relevant into the time we are living now. Sharing, caring, teaching, learning. Survival. Freedom. Respect. The words must be translated into principles, values and beliefs. They must be translated into language and culture, education, justice, housing, transportation, health and programs and services. They must be translated into governing structures, policies, regulations and legislation.

I write up a summary and attach the Elders' verbatim transcripts as part of the draft report. The draft report is re-analyzed and re-synthesized to produce an edited version. The report translates the Fieldworkers interviews into a language we can understand so we think we know. The people who edit don't speak with these Elders, and the Elders didn't speak with them. If I had such a hard time talking with the Elder, maybe the Elder had a hard time talking with me. Maybe I only have a small little tiny part of the story and I understand just as much as the Elder understood about me. It is OK for me, but it's not OK for the project goals. And what about all those other people who "know." How do they "know?" Am I missing something?

The Elders told the fieldworkers. The Elders words were translated. Some of the fieldworkers also listened. The Elders spoke to us. This is what they said, "They walked the land. They knew no laws. And they knew freedom," said the youngest male Fieldworker, Chris Ruben, age 26, from Paulatuk[55]. This is what we heard. Listening to the Elders speak and tell their stories is a wonderful and enriching experience. We are so gifted. Although words on paper may reach across time and space and touch our minds and our hearts, there is so much more to sitting, listening, and sharing experience. We each learn from their words. And the Fieldworkers learned, "For the future, I hope to see the people of today help the younger generation to find their way back to the traditional way of life," said the youngest female Fieldworker, Julie Ann Andre, age 26, from Tsiigehtchic[56].

Reflections on the Fieldwork Program

The Fieldwork Program was initiated to function as an element of the community consultation process during self government negotiations. The Fieldwork Program offered employment opportunities to Inuvialuit and Gwich'in residents in their communities and facilitated their involvement in the self government negotiations process. In having local residents working as Community Fieldworkers, the process of communicating would be facilitated by community residents to community residents. Fieldworkers who would serve as interpreters, translators, and mediators of the process would transmit information. They would become familiar with the status of negotiations, translate the political legal terminology of negotiations to plain language, and interpret community resident feedback and comments back to the negotiating party.

Towards community consultation during self government negotiations, the Beaufort/Delta Self Government conceived to enact the Fieldwork Program as a tool to overcome the difficulties inherent to the translation and interpretation of political legal frameworks to Inuvialuit and Gwich'in residents by having the Fieldworkers serve as mediators. In their role as Fieldworkers in their communities, they access the feedback necessary from residents to aid self government negotiators to establish the necessary mandate from which to negotiate. A survey methodology was employed to inform residents about the status of negotiations and to elicit feedback that would mandate negotiations. In response to survey results the negotiating team undertook the traditional governance community fieldwork process to identify elements of Inuvialuit and

Gwich'in culture that could be integrated and merged into the proposed governing structures.

Towards self government, a participatory action research (PAR) methodology was employed towards transformative social change, capacity building and community development[57]. However important elements of the PAR framework were absent with the research undertaking resembling both empirical and interpretive inquiry methodologies, rather than that of the liberatory inquiry of PAR. Although, the intent was one of socially transformative action toward community development, the essential component of PAR, being spirituality, held no place in a political undertaking. Although PAR contends that PAR is incumbent upon spiritual dimensions, its definitions of spirituality are specific to human beings and do not mirror a perception of spirituality as articulated by indigenous people[58]. For PAR, spirituality concerns itself with human social interaction and the emergence of reflective process that stimulate social transformation. There was no context to the knowledge, rather there was tremendous pressure to deconstruct and reconstruct Elders knowledge.

While the intent to achieve dialogue was accomplished through a community based research process, the dialogue was minimal and constrained. The concern with the production of an end product to document and validate the Elder's insights ultimately decontextualized and stripped those insights and the Elders of their power.

However, the Elders shared their lives with us, and told us about how they lived, as Inuvialuit and Gwich'in – they were telling us something, they were giving us a message. They lived and practiced their values, they lived and practiced their traditions, they lived and practiced their culture. Their way of life is their culture, and their culture is their way of life. No one from outside told them how to live or what to do or when to do it or how to do it. No one told them what to say or how to say what they felt needed to be said. They told us about all the events that came into their lives and changed their ways of living. They told us about all the events that interfered with the transmission and practice of their way of life. They repeated the same message over and over again, with the same inherent meaning, over and over again, in a collective voice with a consensual understanding in a kind and respectful manner. The answers we were seeking were found in the words of each of the Elders and in the words of all of the Elders. So, how, in a respectful manner, may self government be based on the traditional ways of governance of the Inuvialuit and Gwich'in?

Traditional Leadership in the Beaufort/Delta Region

Inuvialuit leadership is thought to have functioned like that of the Inupiaq of northwestern Alaska where large community structures called *karigi* housed large extended families, numbering fifty people or more, each led by the head of the family known as *ataniq*. Leadership was based on skill, generosity, and family connections. Individual and family wealth were based on personal competence, family and community relations, hunting skill and inter-regional trade. Leaders who were successful were called *umialiq*.[59] A good hunter was physically strong, agile, patient, persistent and curious. People would ask a good hunter for advice and information. Good hunters had the best tools and clothing. A good hunter who shared and with others and was not selfish might become a leader of the hunt.[60] Each hunting region had a leader who led the whale and caribou hunts. Leaders always consulted with Elders and trusted their knowledge and wisdom.

> "In the time before Inuvialuit had books, our Elders, both men and women were the keepers of Inuvialuit knowledge. Without them, each generation would have had to have learned everything there was to know by discovering it themselves. The Elders also had the wisdom of age and experience. Anybody wanting to learn had only to sit and listen to an Elder speak."[61]

Angatkuq, or shaman, were men or women with "magical powers" who helped people.[62] There also people who were prophets who had the gift of seeing into the future.[63] The last known *umialiq* of the Inuvialuit was Mangilaluk who lived in Tuktoyaktuk until his death in 1940.[64]

Gwich'in leadership is described as being through "a Chief and one or more medicine men."[65] These persons were so important, "…nothing, in fact, is undertaken without consulting him."[66] Chiefs dealt with matters that concerned the community as a whole. The Chief was responsible for large-scale intertribal trading.[67] The Chief was said to possess qualities of wisdom and courage, intelligence and decisiveness, in addition to being generous and having a concern for all. A community leader is described as having "insouciance, a lighthearted manner, and, modest."[68] Leaders were eloquent in the art of oratory and were most often skilled hunters, although hunters may not have led other activities such as "ceremonial, trade, war, and other international relations."[69] There were also Second Chiefs who attended to the external affairs of the band acting "in good faith and conforming to the standards of generosity and helpfulness expected of a leading man in the community."[70] A Chief was a man who was highly thought of and supported by the community. Shaman may also have been Chiefs.[71] People were said to have great faith in Medicine Men, "the power of the medicine-men is very great…their influence exceeds even that of the Chief…no hunting excursion, no voyage, nothing, in fact, is undertaken without consulting him."[72] Shamans had great influence and status amongst the Gwich'in and "form the dominating group in the economic and intellectual activities of the native world."[73] They were called *ta konyondai*, by the Peel River Gwich'in meaning "he sees things," their role being "primarily to instigate or combat evil, and the causation of all fortune, whether good or bad."[74] Chief Julius was the last hereditary Chief of the Teetl'it Gwich'in at the turn of century.

The reconstruction of traditional leadership and governance of the Inuvialuit and Gwich'in from historical sources like those used above is problematic because as Professor Little Bear says,

> "In Aboriginal societies, the law is "the philosophy, the values, the customs". "Law is not something that is separate and unto itself. Law is the culture, and the culture is the law."[75]

Existing secondary sources pull leadership out of the fabric of traditional life; definition dominates context and context disappears[76]. In addition, the views of both the visitors, and those of contemporary communities, have been seriously affected by loss of traditional knowledge that comes of colonization and death.

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[2] Government of Northwest Territories. (no date) Aboriginal Self Government in the Northwest Territories: Supplementary Booklet 4. "Our Population Profile." www.gov.nt.ca.

[3] Ibid.

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[4] Government of Northwest Territories, Bureau of Statistics. T-Stat Community Profiles. People and Households. http://www.stats.gov.nt.ca

[5] Government of Northwest Territories, Bureau of Statistics. T-Stat Community Profiles. Education and Schooling. http://www.stats.gov.nt.ca

[6] Ibid.

[7] Government of Northwest Territories, Bureau of Statistics. 1991 Aboriginal Peoples Survey: Schooling, Work and Related Activities, Income, Expenses and Mobility. http://www.stats.gov.nt.ca

[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Government of Northwest Territories. Bureau of Statistics. 1991 Aboriginal Peoples Survey: Language, Health Status and Social Issues, http://www.stats.gov.nt.ca

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Inuuqatigiit Curriculum- Inuit Subject Advisory Committee Members: Rose Marie Kirby and Lillian Elias. Elders are Rosie Albert, Emmanual Felix (Kaupquna), Edward Ruben (Angusinauq), Elsie Nilgak, Harry Egotak and Jimmy Memogana.

[16] Inuuqatiqlit: Inuit World View. http://siksik.learnnet.nt.ca/Inuuqatiqlit/1/b1.htm

[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Dene Kede Education: Teacher Sarah Jerome and Elders Bella Ross and Mary Firth Sr.

[22] Dene Kede Education: A Dene Perspective. Teacher's Resource Manual. http://siksik/learnnet.nt.ca/Denekede/3/1a1.htm

[23] Ibid.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid.

[26] See Hampton, Eber in Chapter 2.

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[27] Indigenous languages have been legislated as official languages in the Northwest Territories and include Inuvialuktun, Gwich'in, Sahtu, Slavey, Dogrib and Chipewyan.

[28] Alexie, Robert A. (1997) "A History of the Gwich'in, the Gwich'in Land Claim Process and a Summary of the Gwich'in Agreement." Unpublished paper. Inuvik, N.W.T.

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[31] Beaufort/Delta Self Government Office (1999). Strength Through Partnership. Inuvik, N.W.T. http://www.inuvik.net/self/gov/default/htm.
Ibid.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. (1995) Federal Policy Guide: Aboriginal Self Government. p. 1. http://www.inac.gc.ca

[35] Ibid. p. 17

[36] Ibid.

[37] Government of the Northwest Territories. (1991) Inuvialuit Pitqusiit: The Culture of the Inuvialuit. Education. Inuvik Regional Corporation. Inuvik, N.W.T.

[38] Arctic Institute of North America. (1994) Indigenous Knowledge in Northern Canada: An Annotated Bibliography. Prepared by Howard, L, Ross Goodwin & Lynne Howard for the Canadian Polar Commission. University of Calgary. Calgary.

[39] Ibid. Note. 28.

[40] Beaufort/Delta Self Government Office (1999). Strength Through Partnership. Inuvik, N.W.T. http://www.inuvik.net/self/gov/htm.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Beaufort/Delta Self Government Office. (1998) Fieldwork and Survey Program: Statistical Results. Prepared by Lois Edge. Inuvik, N.W.T.

[44] See Appendix One for discussion concerning project structure, limitations, and constraints relating to language and translation.

[45] Determined to be fifty percent of the available seats.

[46] See Chartrand, Paul elsewhere.

[47] Ibid. Note. 43.

[48] Ibid. The Fieldworkers documented 893 written comments from the survey respondents.

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[49] Ibid. Note 40.

[50] It is my personal opinion that participation in land based activities is essential to health and well being, seemly serving to heal and renew our energies, as though we are participating in a traditional ceremony where we honour ourselves and life.

[51] See theoretical construct in Anderson, Kim (2000) A Recognition of Being: Reconstructing Native Womanhood. Second Story Press. Toronto. To my understanding, Anderson sought the teachings of the women Elders and rethought her way of "being."

[52] The root word of "recognize" relates to "cognition", the action of thought. To see something with clarity when interacting within alternative epistemological foundations requires having to interpret and translate from one system of knowledge to the other. The process of "reflective consciousness" can be used to mediate a reconstruction of our way of thinking.

[53] See Chapter 7 for further discussion.

[54] See discussion concerning project limitations and constraints relating to language and interpretation.

[55] Chris Ruben. Community Fieldworker. Paulatuk. Beaufort/Delta Research and Issues and Methods Workshop. January 1999. Inuvik.

[56] Julie Ann Andre. Community Fieldworker. Tsiigehtchic. Beaufort/Delta Regional Elder/Youth Meeting. March 1999. Aklavik.

[57] See Chapter 7 for discussion on Participatory Action Research based on framework in Smith, Susan.

[58] Refer to Little Bear, Leroy in Chapter 3.

[59] Today the term can also mean someone who has material wealth.

[60] Ibid. Note 37.

[61] Ibid. Note 37. p. 13.

[62] Some of the shaman were feared and not trusted for using their powers against people. Ibid. Note 37. p. 15.

[63] Ibid. Note 37. p. 15.

[64] Canadian Museum of Civilization. Morrison, David (1998) "Retracing an Archaeological Expedition: The Inuvialuit." http://www.civilization.ca/membrs/archaeo/nogap/pinuva.htm

[65] Hardisty, William L. (1867) Notes on the Tinneh or Chepewyan Indians of British and Russian America. Communicated by George Gibbs. Smithsonian Institution (1867) Washington, D.C. p. 311.

[66] Ibid. p. 317.

[67] Slobodin, Richard (1962) Band Organization of the Peel River Kutchin. National Museum of Canada. Bulletin No. 179. Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources. Canada. Ottawa.

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[68] Ibid. p. 45.

[69] Ibid. p. 45.

[70] Ibid. p. 72.

[71] Osgood, Cornelius. (1936) Contributions to the Ethnography of the Kutchin. Yale University Publications in Anthropology. No. 14. Yale University Press. London. p. 123.

[72] Hardisty, William L. (1867) Notes on the Tinneh or Chepewyan Indians of British and Russian America. Communicated by George Gibbs. Smithsonian Institution (1867) Washington, D.C. p. 311.

[73] Osgood, Cornelius. (1936) Contributions to the Ethnography of the Kutchin. Yale University Publications in Anthropology. No. 14. Yale University Press. London. p. 156.

[74] Ibid.

[75] Little Bear, Leroy (2000) "Jagged Worldviews Colliding" in Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision. UBC Press. Vancouver. p. 80.

[76] See Tafoya, Terry in Chapter 2.

Chapter 6 – Traditional Leadership and Governance

Loss of Traditional Knowledge

It is important to note that the Inuvialuit and Gwich'in population decreased significantly during the more than two centuries following the arrival of Europeans to the area. Death by disease arrived during the annual transport of trading materials to the trading posts along the Mackenzie River during the summer months. Both the Inuvialuit and Gwich'in lost large numbers of their initial populations beginning in the early 1800's and continuing right up until the 1930's. Various epidemics and infectious diseases such as small pox, scarlet fever, measles, influences, dysentery, and "contagious distemper" decimated the local populations.[1]

The arrival of European whalers, explorers and traders introduced infectious diseases to the Inuvialuit. The first diseases arrived in the 1840's, followed by an epidemic of measles or scarlet fever in 1865 and typhus or fever in 1868.[2] By 1889, the Inuvialuit population was in serious decline. There were two lethal measles epidemics in 1900 and 1902 which further reduced the population to an estimated 250 people, or ten percent of the initial population.[3] The Inuvialuit population decreased by an estimated 90 percent from several thousand to number several hundred between 1890 and 1905.[4] "It is said that all of the Inuvialuit numbered in the thousands before the coming of the Tan'ngit."[5]

> "The summer of *Kittigariuit* people fell ill and many of them died. Almost the whole tribe perished, for only a few families survived... When the people left for *Kiklovak* they were but a handful compared to the number they had been. It was 1902..."[6]

> "1902 at *Kitigaryuit* is still clear and vivid in my memory. I was there when the epidemic destroyed my people – countless died, young and old, the best of us, the peak... This was the end of *Kitigaryuit*... The place which was filled with laughter, noise and activity became a land of desolation... Lest you forget them, remember the tales and sing the songs and recall the feats and virility of our ancestors and yours – people of stature, strength and courage – above all, people living on the land, their land, our land now."[7]

There were once a people known as the *Immaryungmiut* Inuvialuit who lived in the Husky Lakes area who disappeared following a feud that ended in a revenge killing.

"The Inuvialuit seldom engaged in killing one another, for it was simply not a part of their thinking."[8] The Inuvialuit of today wonder if these people are ancestral to some of the people in Greenland.

Ethnohistorians estimate that the introduction of diseases by Europeans may have decimated the Gwich'in population, "in the 1860's one Kutchin was alive where six had been aboriginally."[9] Jones estimated there were twenty-two Gwich'in tribes during his visit on behalf of the Smithsonian Institute with the Gwich'in in 1866. He comments, "They were once very numerous, but wars among themselves, disease, and famine have reduced their aggregate very much. One or two of the tribes are nearly extinct."[10] Osgood, during his visit to region in 1932, notes the extinction of the Birch Creek tribe from scarlet fever and that of several hundred Yukon Flats people, only one family remained.[11]

Not only did many die, the knowledge of a people is also lost when Elders, traditional leaders, shamanic spiritual leaders and healers, hunters, women and children die. When elements of a system of knowledge disappear, the system is no longer in balance. In spite of this, people are working towards balance in a new context, remaining respectful of the old.

Aboriginal View of Aboriginal Governance in Canada

The Dene of the Northwest Territories sought to articulate a Dene Model of Government in 1984. At a meeting attended by Aboriginal leaders and Elders at Edzo, Northwest Territories, participants at the Dene Government Workshop facilitated by the Western Constitutional Forum identified values and principles for a traditional Dene Model of Government. A foundation for government based on the traditional Dene way of life would be based on the values of sharing, respect, caring, equality, self-respect and pride.[12] Twelve Traditional Dene Principles were identified, along with specific recommendations concerning land and land use, public government, Aboriginal rights and timing of proposed changes prior to the eventual division of the NWT (which meant the possibility of Aboriginal people becoming a minority if there were to be a western territory). The Dene stated, "A new form of government in Denendeh should eventually be recognized in the Canadian constitution as a self governing jurisdiction within Canadian confederation (province-like status)."[13]

> "The Creator gave us our instructions in which are ordained our duties and freedoms; our roles and responsibilities; our customs and traditions; our languages; our place on Mother Earth within which we are to enjoy peace, security, and prosperity. These are the spiritual ways by which we live."[14]

Aboriginal people have a holistic perspective of life and the world. In view of the many forces of colonization that have impacted on the health and well being and survival of the Aboriginal people of Canada, and in light of the power and strength found within their own cultures and traditions, "...many are seeking to revitalize traditional values and practices and their reintegration into institutions of government."[15] The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples determined important aspects of Aboriginal traditions of governance to include: the centrality of the land; individual autonomy and responsibility; the rule of law; the role of women; the role of elders; the role of family and clan; leadership; consensus in decision making; and, the restoration of traditional institutions."[16]

> "Inuit society governed the behavior of its members with a complex system of values, beliefs and taboos that clearly outlined the expectations of how people should behave. These rules were retained and passed on by the Elders through oral tradition as well as by example passed to the children."[17]

The forces of colonization arrived with the newcomers to the land. Today, we estimate what the indigenous population might have been three centuries previous, knowing only that there was a substantial population decrease brought about through war, famine, dislocation and disease. The practices of the fur trade shifted the centrality of the land in the lives of the indigenous inhabitants from one of spiritual connection towards the pursuit of economic development opportunities and environmental resource extraction. A different system of law founded on the doctrine of discovery and pervasive concept of manifest destiny severely impacted on the traditional ways of governance of the people.

> "Elders are teachers and the keepers of a nation's language, culture, tradition and laws; they are the trusted repositories of learning on history, medicine and spiritual matters. Their roles include making decisions on certain important matters, providing advice, vision and leadership, and resolving disputes within the community."[18]

The traditional ways of governance had evolved over thousands of years and were based on an intricate foundation of traditional values and beliefs that interconnected individual autonomy and responsibility in a delicate balance towards the maintenance of harmony. Human beings' growth and development were nurtured from birth unto death to strengthen the individual and ensure survival of the collective whole. An individual's responsibility was to the community. Traditional systems of governance were based on a rule of law known as "natural law" that came from the Creator. "The law tells people how to conduct themselves in their relations with one another and the rest of creation."[19] Social order was maintained through consensus and mutually agreed upon sanctions applied only when the balance of the system was threatened. The role of women is seen as one of equality with each member of the community having roles and responsibilities. Both family units and extended families assumed positions of responsibility towards the well being of the community.

> "Families and clans fulfilled a number of essential governmental functions. They determined who belonged to the group, provided for the needs of members, regulated internal relations, dealt with offenders and regulated us of lands and resources. They also imbued individuals with a sense of basic identity and guided them in cultivating their special gifts and fulfilling their responsibilities."[20]

In the North,

> "...a study of leadership among Dene identifies the functions of spokesperson, advisor, economic leader (as hunter and trapper), spiritual advisor, prophet and role model. Qualities associated with these functions include oratorial skill, wisdom, authority, economic proficiency, generosity, spiritual insight and respect."[21]

Leaders are responsible individuals who are expected to practice community values and serve the people. For the Inuit, there were two types of leaders, one being *angajuqqaaq*, a person to be listed to and obeyed, "the other," *isumataq*, one who thinks. Both types of leadership were earned."[22] For the Copper Inuit, known now as Inuvialuit, independent families lived autonomously year round coming together during seasonal gatherings. All people possessed equal status in decision making.

Consensus is seen as a process where "...all community members should be involved in the process of reaching agreement on matters of common interest."[23] Decision making through consensus involves all perspectives being put forward in an atmosphere of mutual respect until all issues are gradually resolved thus merging into consensus.

Qualities of a consensus system include face-to-face interaction with all affected by the decision making process.[24] Traditional methods of decision making allow for leadership to both represent, and be accessible and accountable to their communities.

Returning to traditional systems of governance would see the restoration in the community of the roles of women, Elders and extended families. Alternative models are being developed by First Nations that are based on traditional forms of governance or, alternatively, based on existing systems of public government that are founded upon the traditional values and practices of the people.

Traditional Leadership and Indigenous Governance

> In 1864, 8,354 Navajos were forced to walk from Dinetah to Bosque Redondo in southern New Mexico, a distance of three hundred miles. They were held for four years until the U.S. government declared the assimilation attempt a failure. More than 2,500 died of smallpox and other illnesses, depression, severe weather conditions, and starvation. The survivors returned to Dinetah, "homeland of the people," in June of 1868...
>
> All the way we told each other, "We will be strong as long as we are together." I think that is what kept us alive. We believed in ourselves and the old stories that the holy people had given us. "This is why," she would say to us, "This is why we are here. Because our grandparents prayed and grieved for us....The women began to make long, tiered calico skirts (for themselves) and fine velvet shirts for the men. They decorated their dark velvet blouses with silver dimes, nickels, and quarters. They had no use for money then. It is always something to see – silver flashing in the sun against dark velvet and black, black hair.[25]

Robert Yazzie, Chief Justice of the Navajo Nation, describes Navajo law as being "based upon equality and consensus". The Navajo make their own decisions. A traditional leader is someone who plans and speaks well, who can teach and give advice, and who "...has wisdom, spirituality, leadership ability, and the respect of the community."[26] Chief Justice Yazzie states "Healing depends upon a process that moves people from "head-thinking" to "heart-thinking".[27] The Navajo process of peacemaking is a process of participatory democracy where everyone who is affected or interested in a decision is involved in group decision making through discussion and consensus. The concept of sovereignty is described as a group of people making their own decision and controlling their own lives in contrast to colonialism where "national legislatures and policy makers make decision for Indigenous peoples, tell them what they can and cannot do, refuse to support them, and effectively shut them out of the process."[28] Healing is a personal process where individuals take control and reassume responsibility of their lives. "Internal sovereignty" as noted below is achieved through the healing of individuals, which in turn strengthens the family.

> "Ultimately, the lesson is that we, as Indigenous peoples, must start within. We must exercise internal sovereignty, which is nothing more than taking control of our personal lives, our families, our clans, and our communities. To do that, we must return to our traditions, because they speak to right relationships, respect, solidarity, and survival."[29]
>
> "Traditional indigenous communications is based on respect, using respectful language and respectful discourse. A great deal of non-Indigenous communication is designed to compel the listener to accept the position taken by the speaker. Another way of putting this is that Indigenous people are offended by bossy or pushy discourse. The discourse itself shows that the speaker is not willing to acknowledge the equality of the listener or talk out a decision." [30]

Weatherford[31] tells us about a history where Europe was ruled by monarchs and the "…United States judiciously assembled bits and pieces of many different systems to invent a completely new one" borrowing "some distinctive elements from the American Indians."[32] The United States was formed, represented by thirteen separate and sovereign states. The suggestion of federal model was proposed by the Iroquois Chief Canassatego in July 1744 and was based on the model of the League of the Iroquois founded under a constitution of the Great Law of Peace after 1000 A.D.[33] Benjamin Franklin, an official printer, kept records of speeches and negotiations of Indian assemblies and treaty negotiations in publications for the state of Pennsylvania. He began to study Indian culture and institutions and became an Indian commissioner in the 1750's. His work with the Iroquois led him to refine "his political techniques of persuasion, compromise, and slow consensus building."[34]

The Iroquois League united five principal Indian Nations, each composed of a council of delegates, or sachems, elected by the tribes of the nation. Each nation governed its own territory and each council decided public policy issues. All sachems (lawmakers) sat on the Grand Council of the League to discuss issues of common concern, each representing their own nations while representing the whole League. All sachems held equal power that was dependent upon the individual's persuasive powers. The Grand

Council met at least once every five years or as necessary. American anthropologist Lewis Henry Morgan said, the council,

> "declared war and made peace, sent and received embassies, entered into treaties of alliance, regulated the affairs of subjugated nations, received new members into the League, extended its protection over feeble tribes, in a word, took all needful measures to promote their prosperity, and enlarge their dominion."[35]

The Secretary of the Continental Congress of the United States, Charles Thomson, wrote about Indian social and political institutions describing each Indian community having a council house for making local decisions and for electing delegates to the tribal council. The tribal council in turn elected delegates to the national council. Outsiders "naturalized" by the Indian nation could become elected as leaders. Sachems were lawmakers and could not go to war so there were separate leaders for peace and for war. If a leader lost the confidence of the people, "the women of his clan impeached him and expelled him by official action, whereupon the women then choose a new sachem."[36] The Iroquois League admitted new members, ie, displaced tribes, into the League as needed, similar the United States admitting new states. Weatherford identifies and contrasts a number of governance procedures including the electoral college system, office titles, speaking protocol, objective to reach agreement, shifting factions, and, restrictions of public office, practiced by both the United States and the Iroquois League. The federal principles of the Iroquois League are the same principles that led to the creation of the United Nations. "Washington, D.C., has never recognized the role of the Indians in the writing of the United States Constitution or in the creation of political institutions that seem so uniquely American."[37]

Taiaiake Alfred, of Kahnawake Mohawk Territory and Director of the Indigenous Governance Program at the University of Victoria, expresses his guiding vision to be "…a re-traditionalized politics, and the re-establishment of our nations and relationships on the basis of the sacred teachings given to us by our ancestors."[38] Alfred shares the ritual of condolence, "an ancient and sacred custom" among his people, the Rotinoshonni, and calls upon indigenous people in North America to,

> "…recover our strength, our wisdom, and our solidarity by honouring and revitalizing the core of our traditional teachings. Only by heeding the voices of our ancestors can we restore our nations and put peace, power, and righteousness back into the hearts and minds of our people" towards self-determination and indigenous governance.[39]

He identifies the underlying cause of indigenous people's suffering to be "alienation – separation from our heritage and ourselves" and leading to "a crisis of the mind: a lack of conscience and consciousness."[40] Alfred urges,

> "Native leaders must aspire to embody traditional values: commitment to a profoundly respectful way of governing, based on a worldview that balances respect for autonomy with recognition of a universal interdependency, and promotes peaceful coexistence among all the elements of creation."[41]

He considers it "impossible" to understand indigenous reality outside of a community context – "Ideas transform when they make the journey from mind of one person into the collective consciousness; and our peoples' reality is communal."[42]

Alfred proposes, "…to lay the groundwork for a general understanding and reconstruction of social and governmental institutions embodying traditional indigenous cultural values…"[43] by recommending a set of political and social values based on the teachings of traditional indigenous cultures. He contends the form of the Rotinohshonni Condolence ceremony is "central to the goal of conveying the logic of our traditions" which must be conveyed in their entirety in narrative form.[44]

> "The logic of our traditions has developed over countless generations of experience. Following a communicative method of such antiquity and strength brings us closer to the core message of respect for the inter-relatedness of word, thought, belief, and action. The meanings of our traditional teachings are embedded in the structure of the narrative as much as in any words one might write in order to explain them"[45].

He identifies a traditional framework within which certain beliefs, values and principles form a persistent core of a community's culture to be "…considered within the broad framework of values we all share: freedom, justice and peace."[46] To Alfred, leadership consists of the power of rational thought towards the achievement of harmony through the act of persuasion. The parts of the ceremony are summarized:

- welcoming visitors in peace and respect, reciprocating respect, a series of affirmations, "rejoicing in our survival," "recognizing our pain and sorrow," and, "recognizing our responsibility to our ancestors,"
- to the heart of the ceremony using rhetorical and symbolic gestures to bring something back to life to a place of peace by saying, doing, or giving something;
- to reclaim our "intellectual, political and geographical space,"

- followed by a metaphorical period where "the sun is lost" because we cannot see,
- calling for "leaders as individuals" to "free the mind," to have "a clear mind" and "do your best for your people" towards unity working cooperatively,
- advising leadership not to turn away from their responsibilities, to bring knowledge to the people and "ensure good communication within the community and with other communities", and, "a restatement of all major themes," and "repetitions of important teachings," and,
- ending with sacred songs to keep listening to "the grandfathers," "to keep the traditional teachings in your heart and mind," to listen to traditional knowledge, commit yourself to the first principles and values, listening to our ancestors and to those yet to come; and, wishing all well.[47]

Alfred contends the current public government, corporate and municipal government colonial models being negotiated in Canada's north as not being indigenous governments, rather "…they use the cooperation of Native leaders in the design and implementation of such systems to legitimize the state's long-standing assimilationist goals for indigenous nations and lands"[48].

Communities need translate and adapt traditional concepts to become reality in their communities. Traditional concepts are identified to include: wholeness with diversity, shared culture, communication, respect and trust, group maintenance, participatory and consensus-based government, youth empowerment, and, strong links to the outside world.[49] Indigenous leaders "….held in high esteem within indigenous communities share four general traits: they draw on their own personal resources as sources of power; they set the example; they are modest and funny; and, they are role models."[50]

The four basic objectives of indigenous governance are identified by Alfred to be: structural reform "by rejecting electoral politics and restructuring Native governments to accommodate traditional decision making, consultation, and dispute-resolution processes,"[51] reintegration of native languages with teaching of languages being a top priority, economic self sufficiency and development of human resources, and nation-to nation building with the state with Native communities asserting "their right to govern their own territories and people."[52]

Inuvialuit and Gwich'in Perspectives of Traditional Governance

Based on the results of the regional self government survey and community workshops conducted during 1997/1998 and resident's expressed preference that new self government institutions be based on Inuvialuit and Gwich'in traditional ways, the Beaufort/Delta Self Government Office determined to undertake an exploration of the traditional ways of governing by Inuvialuit and Gwich'in.

Some of the Elder's words from the Traditional Governance Community Fieldwork Project draft project report[53] are presented in order to communicate Inuvialuit and Gwich'in Elder perspectives relating to their understanding of traditional governance. The words and voices of the Inuvialuit and Gwich'in Elders serve to guide our understanding of a way of life as lived by these Elders.

Portions of interviews with Inuvialuit and Gwich'in male and female Elders from each of the eight communities were selected. Given that a small number of interviews were conducted in Aklavik, four Gwich'in Elders from the community of Fort McPherson were selected.

Respectfully, and to honour the words the Elders have shared with us, the Elders words are quoted verbatim as they appear in the interview transcripts. Some of the interviews were spoken in the Inuvialuit and Gwich'in languages and translated into English[54]. Their voices tell us about how the Inuvialuit and Gwich'in lived their lives in the recent past and they do so in context.

Lucy Inglangasuk, Inuvik

"When they finish hunting whales and they go up land and berries grow. Start picking berries and me and my grandmother we always pick berries and we use those beluga stomach to put berries in them. Yeah, when there is lots of berries me and my grandmother we pick lots of berries for winter time and put them away. We put them in the ice house. It's winter time we go somewhere, sometimes stay in one place for a year and move again to Atkinson Point and Anderson River. My grandfather always take us anywhere and go and winter anywhere. They always go where lots of foxes and colored foxes and go somewhere, they just follow the animals. Her grandfather and after that they go back to Keevik again for summer. They always stayed all alone by themselves, her grandfather and grandmother and herself. They never be lonely, they know, they're always so busy so they never get lonely. Even her grandparents are really old and she stay with them and she never feels lonely and nowadays when you take young people somewhere they always say, how boring, how boring and all that stuff. Winter anywhere and there is no skidoo's that time and only dog team, days they use. They go all over with dog team."

"Long ago people don't know about God. Before her grandparents they didn't know anything about God. When they start hearing about God they really respect Sundays."[55]

Edward Lennie, Inuvik

"Before the missionaries, they had their own beliefs. They had their own beliefs and this belief was very strong. One thing was taught very strongly was that, when you get an animal you make sure you give thanks and you put some little bit aside cause there's something else might be hungry that come after you. And always there's a few things that I was taught on, hunting wise, on every animal that you get. I was told to, after you skin it, make sure you cut the head off. Right on that last joint right at the end there, when you cut there and when the joint break, you say *kingalikpik*, means you send the spirit away from that animal is back to life, *kingalikpik*. That means, I want some more. And they help. They claim that you're going to get more and more animals, that you just got and help you. That was the meaning of the whole thing, and, fish was a little different. Fish when you get it, hit it and say *kingalikpik*. You know you didn't cut it, you hit it. And, one of the things that I was taught by my uncle, he told me everything you see on earth, he said its got to start from some place. There's got to be a Creator some place. It started by Creators, it has to start, not just going to grow like that. It's not a tree or willow or anything like that. Any animal, it's got to start, it's got a Creator for it and there's a reason for every animal. There's a reason for everything that's put on this earth. So he said you have to respect that and he told me this cause after missionaries were here I wanted to remember one thing in all the days of your life. He said when you're hunting you're aiming your rifle, just when you're going to squeeze the trigger you always ask for guidance for your bullet to hit. Simon Anaktok, that's what he taught me. And right today, I use it, and I pass it on to any kid that come and stay with me and hunt with me. Any kid that stay with me at anytime when I'm out hunting with them, if I were out hunting rats, if I were hunting caribou, if I were hunting moose, if I were hunting anything. I always tell them kids you make sure when you're going to squeeze the trigger, don't forget, just as you're pulling that trigger, you ask for guidance for that bullet to hit and it don't make a mistake. And it pass on to me directly like this, so I had to try it. You know being a person, you always try it, see it. I shoot through thick bush and I ask for guidance for that bullet to hit and I get my animal. Sometimes it's just like it's impossible and I'm used to it, you know. Even if I'm doing something else I'm going to shoot. I always ask for my bullet to hit, even if I'm shooting target, I'm just so used to it. I just say to myself, I don't say it out loud. So these are the things are passed on to me. So you see it don't matter if there were missionaries or not, they know that there was a Creator. That they always respect it and everything. Like that joint that I was telling you about, any animal that you get, whales, you cut the head off, you cut by there and you say *kingolikpik*, they call *neklok*. So it could away back to the spirits. So it could come back, come back more and they say by doing that it was passed on all the time from way, we don't know where. The first Inuvialuits started that so we had to, and they, as far as I know, they were good doctors, Inuvialuit people were good doctors. I know I saw a few people."

"So these are the things, and one thing that's going, and you don't see very much is somebody that go out and he make a successful hunt to give his people. Lots of times you see somebody do a successful hunt and when he start giving out he try and sell it. Well, that's not the way we are taught, very, very seldom sell anything, myself. And these are the things that we should have kept. We should have fight hard to keep it, but we're losing it, both the doctor and being the doctor."[56]

Geddes Wolki, Sachs Harbour

"Yeah, I like hunting in Banks Island, so many game and some years, a lot of bears too. When you go and hunt bear, you get bear right away sometimes. But some years, not too many bears too but some years it's so many bears, you don't have to go far sometime to hunt bear. And, when you go to open water, around March and April, boy its good to hunt seals, a lot of seals, too. One time, me and my wife, went bear hunting and we take our little boy Elvis along to camp, way out on the ice outside of Big Bluff. Next day we travel towards Tara Island, when we reach Tara Island, we go and camp way out again. And when we see few bear tracks here and there, we camp. All we got is twenty-two, two fifty rifle, hunting bear and then we make camp where its quite a few fresh bear tracks. We never see any bears yet that day, so after big meal of soup we went to bed and two o'clock in the morning, we hear big breath of the bear. He was really mad at the dog, he was beside the dog trying to get at the dog, I think. The dog never even bark, he been rushing for the dog but the dog got up just in time. And then the rifle was outside, I open up the flap of the tent and grab my rifle. As soon as the bear saw me, he start walking pretty fast towards me. I could hear his footsteps getting closer and closer in the sugar snow and then I got no time to bring all the rifle in, half ways of the barrel was still out of the tent. And when he reach me while I was holding the flap of the tent, he push me with his big head. Boy, just like a rock, so hard to hit and then after little while, I could tell he kiss, where my hand was kind of sticking out of the tent. It was pretty soft, his big nose and then after awhile, he push the tent by the side, I thought he was going in too, but I stop somehow. I was thinking that if he ever push the tent in and try to go in, I was going to shoot point blank. And then he go back out and he go around the sleds and go in front of the sleds. There was some more seal oil, little bit there and there in a plastic bag. After little while, he start shaking the sled, the tent was barely up. I was holding the tent little bit so it won't fall. After he, he pull the plastic out from my sled, he was breathing so, just like something. It was big bear anyway. After a little while, Charlie got his tent tied to my sled, too. He scream so high, I went out even in the dark, it was half moon, kind of cloudy and dark. And I went out. The bear show up about ten feet away from in front of the sled so I shot at it. I could see big flame from my rifle in the dark when I shot at it. I shot one more time and I finally thought of the flashlight. So Lena get the flashlight and she was flashing it, came missing the bear, it was kind of scared, too, I think, so I gave it two more shots and the bear went down. After that I go and check if he's still alive or not. He was dead. The reason that guy scream, before I went out, the bear been knocking the back of the tent down and then he start walking, after he knock the tent down. That guy was on his sleeping bag and he was walking over his body. Boy, he said, it was so heavy that bear, when it start stepping on him and through the tent, he just about bite his head too. He, he open his mouth and just about crush his head, I think. He put his head inside his mouth for awhile but he never close his mouth. Good thing. Charlie would have been dead if he closes his mouth right there. Yeah, that's when I went out to save that guy, even in the dark, I could barely see anything when, when the bear show up, I could barely see it, so white that bear. Yeah, he just about killed that guy, I think. Yeah, until next time, again."[57]

Lena Wolki, Sachs Harbour

"I got no other way to live except by igloo and tent in the summer, yeah, its tough bout when you live right in it, it don't seem hard for you, and you melt ice for tea snow for cooking and we use oil lamps, oil lamps made out of rocks. Soapstone, we use that kind in the snow house, the igloo, we cook with them and everything, cook with that kind, they're still good, we cook anyway, make tea and everything. They dry their clothes over the flame."

"Long, long ago, when I first find out anyway, when I was growing up, we don't know anything about the government, no government. We could do anything we like, but we don't know anything about the law, and yet, people each other and when we get government, I even started family allowance, like $6 a month, family allowance, that's what we live on, $6 a month."

"You really respect the land, you don't leave anything in the land long ago, take everything, you even eat guts and everything long ago. You don't waste nothing, you know, caribou guts and everything, big bag. *Nagukak*, and we use to, that stuff, everything."

"I never used to hear it, really, tell a story about those stories long, long, old, really old ones, but I don't remember none of them cause I was too small. In the evenings when people finish doing everything, they sit together in the tents or in the igloo in the evenings. They just tell stories, boy, it used to be nice. I should've remembered them, used to tell stories. Nowadays, its, there's no more that kind, too. I play string game and *napaachak*, everything, yeah, we never bored long ago."[58]

Edward Ruben, Paulatuk

"We never use to use mileage in our time. We used to just say we travel from one place to another. We don't talk about mileages. Maybe we travel five or six hours to another camp. When we travel when the weather is easy or foggy. My dad, our grandfather, said never forget which direction you want to go, north, northeast. They always tell us to watch snowdrifts from the last storm. When we travel at night we used the stars. We take directions where we go. They always have something, like when the sun first come out people used to get together and have a big feast. In the evenings, start telling stories, stories about what they were hunting, when they travel."

"I used to see a lot of people when I was young, well off hard working people, trapping, fishing, hunting. Everybody trying hard. When it start fishing and hunting whales in the summer, people not like today. When you hunt, four to six people hunt. When they hunt animal, they share it with other people, people were friendly, willing to help, not like today. That's the way I grew up with people. In spring, geese hunting, when they put up tent outside of each other. When you wake up in the morning you can hear people hollering for coffee or a cup of tea. Yeah, lively people. You know they don't live quiet like today. Today is different. When a person want to go today, sometimes they don't even say they are going that way."

"I never see law. When I was old enough to understand, you know, government, law, police, police officers were there when I began to understand, and RC Mission and Anglican already came to the north."

"When I get old enough to understand, the people share everything, when they get caribou they share it. When they get whale they share with people, but when they trap, trapping, I never see people share it."

"Yeah, that's the kind of people I grew up with and later on we started having Hudson Bay post all over north, like *Kitigazuit* is one and Letty Harbour used to have one. Pierce Point and Coppermine and Reed Island. But further east I don't know. Today they change name, it used to be Hudson Bay Company now today its Northern Stores. My dad, when he took us to Paulatuk area, boy, lonely country. We used to live all by ourselves in Tom Cod Bay. The only time we see people is Christmas season. When we all go to Christmas in Letty Harbour. One year we had RCMP living not far from us. They spent the winter in Langton Bay, Sunrock. I don't know how many of them exactly, fifteen or sixteen RCMP's. Larson, he used to be Captain of the RCMP, Sunrock, when first come to the north. When they stayed in Langton Bay and he used to come to Tom Cod Bay and jiggling for tom cods to feed their dogs. When you don't have any problems or trouble, RCMP's are just like you, friendly, willing to help. Nice people, here to help people."

"We learn everything from our parents. When we're home, my mom outdoors with our dad. When we start camping we follow our dad. Whatever he say. Not like today, we don't have machine to go out with. We used to do a lot of walking, days after days. Especially when we start hunting for winter clothing. We'd stay away until we got enough skins for clothing and meat. When we can't bring all meat, we'd make caches with rocks. Try hard to make our living. We don't want to get stuck in the middle of winter with no more fish or meat. We don't want to see that happen. Our parents used to tell us to do hunting work. We used to do a lot of that. The only transportation we had was dog team. Dogs had to be in good shape and well fed because that's the only transportation we had for hauling wood, ice. We used dogs for everything, hunting, trapping, that's the best transportation we had, we had to watch our dogs."

"In winter we used snow houses. In the summer, if we don't have a tent we used willows. Willow frame, then we use moss or grass for insulation and then after we started getting canvasses from the Hudson Bay. Then we started to own tents. When we have nothing made in Hudson Bay, my Dad buy canvas and my mom makes tents for us.

"We can't live like white people. It doesn't matter who we are, how hard we try, because white people way is their life, you know, white people's mind is money, put that money in the bank and they get enough then pass it on to their kids. Makes a lot difference, like take me, I worked for about thirty years or more. What I got today? It's not my traditional way of life for me. Long as we got money for food. Money to buy clothing, money to buy sled, rifle, shells. We're happy."[59]

Mary Ivik Ruben, Paulatuk

"Yeah, long ago we used to live, that's the best living we have, we live, we put up our tents, then we sit outside, make fire, make tea. You got everything, just like, even if you're short of things. But when you live in the land, you could eat anything, you know, the food, the things you have, you could live without, as long as you have sugar and tea, that's the most important to live, when you live out, living out, best thing to have, you know, like out of town, that's how we used live long ago, walking, and pick things from the ground, you could pick berries, anything to eat, anything you could live in the land."

"Like every spring, when we used to live long ago, with dogs, we go to Rock River for geese hunt and after that. After geese hunt, we live, go to Fish Lake, sealing, to make some oil, living for the winter. They make, like fuel, that's how. We don't have cans or things like that. Long we used to make our own, seal skin, for the oil, for the winter and then we keep them in the ground. We keep them inside the ground in summertime. And then in October time, we put it out and leave it out, that's how we used to live. All kinds of food, they make dry meat, dry fish, all kinds of things, they put it out for the winter, that's how we used to live. Just like we have everything, too. When you have things like that in summertime, when we're so busy making things for the winter, we don't live, we don't have much fun in summertime, when we're making food for the winter. Than after that, after we finish making food, we could do anything, we go anywhere, that's how our parents train us, like that, so we don't have to suffer in the wintertime. Sometimes its really hard to find in the winter, that's how come our parents used to treat us like that, make things for the winter, that's really important things, to make things for the winter, anything you could pick and put away for the winter."

"Things have to be done the right way, when people work together. When you have bosses, you have to go through their bosses to do things right. If it's not done right, it's really hard for them to do things."

"Long ago they have a different way, they don't change. Now everything is so changed, it's not even funny. Everything changed. You know it's really hard for some people. They want to do it themselves, the way they used to live long ago, but the government, it really changed things, really changed things. Sometimes people want to do it by themselves but you have to follow the government now. The way they are doing it right now, it's hard for them sometimes."[60]

Sam Oliktoak, Holman

I was told by my mother that it was about maybe in early October, that I was born in the fall time when people were hunting caribou. A place, my birthplace, my birthplace is called *Kudidook*. It was a high, high overland at the Prince Albert Sound. A high land that has a valley where people would go on top the land. It's route where the caribou would travel to migrate up north and to travel back south in the fall. And people who have done their caribou hunting in that valley, people when they're going to wait for the caribou to come by, they would dig up holes with caribou antlers deep enough so that they can dig holes in the holes. Then they can stoop down and wait for caribou to come by. And it was a route, for the caribou when they were traveling, up north and south in the fall time. And they call them, when the people dug up holes in the ground for people to stoop down and hide from the caribou, they call them *aluaheemyok*. They call them *dahloos*, where people often came to this, are to do their caribou hunting. People who dug holes on the ground, they pile up flat rocks right by the holes that they have dug so that when caribou are passing by they won't see the people, the caribou won't see them. And when the caribou are passing by they can just use their bows and arrows and their spears to kill their caribou. When they dug up holes on the ground, they would pile up flat rocks and make it safe around the hole. And they would sort of make it like an igloo and they would make very warm. It would be like in the late fall, in October, the month of October. And its beginning to get quite cold by then and the people would make sure that the stone igloos are warm so that we can sit all day long and wait for caribou to go by. In the fall time, people would come around to this area called *Koodidooq* to do their caribou hunting because it was a route for the caribou to travel back south by. And they have often come back and forth pretty well every fall time to do their caribou hunting in that area. And further down in the sound there also, some, some rivers along, along the rivers by the coast, its quite gravelly, there in the coast and it is a place known where the bearded seal that are sunning on the beach, on the shore, people who are hunting towards them would make their parkas inside out so the fur is outside and crawl towards the bearded seal and as they get closer they make their kill as they get towards the bearded seal, then they would try to spear it by the eye because it would be easier to try and make a kill. And when they come towards a bearded seal or a seal that's on top the gravel, when a person has made their crawl towards the, then they know exactly where to try and spear it because, its easier when they spear it with a spear just above the eye, then it would reach right into the brain."

"They make two large igloos together side by side, and make it one entrance in the igloo and they use big, big igloos like that to do their feasting and dancing. Or, also they may join three large igloos that are together and the center, the center igloo which is the largest would be sort of like a hall, or a dance hall where they would gather and feast and dance, and not only feasting and dancing but in the center igloo they also would put caribou or seal rope across where they would do games such as swinging, to see who would stay up the longest on the rope and who would be able to swing over and over the longest, and stay and see who stay up on the rope the longest. People back then when they feast and dance and play games, they used to often compete with one another. See who would play the games the longest, or who may even bring out a new song and the motions of the dance. They used to compete with one another in those days. People who have gotten together from the south area or people who are from the *Kookalookdooq* area when they get together, they try and compete with one another through the drum dancing or the games. Or when they gather to feast then that's the time they try to compete with one another either through games or dances. And the people from the south area, they often always have a new drum dance song or a number of songs that they already have heard and learned, and when they get together with people from *Kookalookdooq* area then these people that, hearing the new songs that are being sung in the drum dances, they feel they are left out because they try and compete through songs and the dances in those days. And those were the ways of long ago. People, as I was growing, people back then were healthy people. Because they lived off the land and off the animals and a good diet that they had. You don't see not too many people getting sick or even getting the cold. The ways of people long ago, it's very, very different from today's living. And long ago when people were alive, they were very, very, very healthy people. They don't often go looking and looking for something to eat. They've always had something, they have, whenever they have hunted, they have stored away and cached away so therefore, all you need to do was go to your meat cache to get dry meat or caribou meat, or even dry fish, or fish, frozen, fish, that are stored away in meat caches."[81]

Mabel Nigiyok, Holman

"There's no houses, no, no houses in those days, only caribou tent. Tent that is made out of caribou hides, they use it in the fall time before it get too cold. And they don't use in the real cold weather out when it start to get frosting, it start to get wet and all that so they don't use it. Then when there's enough snow to make an igloo, they move into an igloo or snow house. When they used to live around Cook area, *Halaevaliq*, and they used to go up the lakes in the Fall time to do fishing and when they were heading back towards Cook River towards the ocean. I guess that's where I was born, they had, it was not enough snow, it was not enough snow to make an igloo, so I was just on the outside in the river on Cook River. And, long ago too that, they have children while they're really young. Not like nowadays and while they were living there around *Havaevaliq* area, Cook River, I get to know, starting to remember, they were using only snow, snow houses such as igloo."

"One is *tooqtuliaq*, it's made out of either caribou skin or rabbit feet and that *tooqtuliak* is to make sure that it could insulate any sound that the feet may make on the snow or ice. And when they use *tooqtuyliak*, it, there's two things, one to keep their feet warm and the other is to block out any noise that a person might be making with his feet. And they use that when their *niqbukdoin*, waiting for seal in a seal hole and ready to harpoon. Waiting. I wait, I used to see my father doing that but only thing it seems like it's so tiring waiting and waiting. Gotta have a lot of patience. And they used to use a little hair because a lot of times you can't hear the seal when it's breathing. And they would use that little hair and once in the hole there, about a quarter of an inch thick, wide, I should say, and when the seal start going in and out, they know its breathing and that's when they harpoon it. And that's how I learned, because I used to follow my father and to see how, see how they used to hunt but the actual action of harpooning the seal I forgot, and also I see them also getting seals by seal hooks in the holes, the seal holes. And when they find seal holes near the igloos, they used to go and wait in the morning to wait for seal. When the seal is only about half mile away, just when the daylight start to come, because the seals move around in the morning and also the evening. I remember seeing them, they used to go out in the ocean, in the ice when there's enough snow for igloo. And, those people that go out, they used to go out near *Halihavic*, that's in Prince William Sound, probably about five, ten miles out in the ocean where there's more seal holes where they could be able to do their sealing. That's what I remember when I was a child."

"And they had many names for those things they used to do traditionally, but I forget some of those names because it was their way of life and that's how they used to use it. And during the summer too, right nowadays that we used to take kids out, out on the land and away from the community, from the houses. And how they used to be able to teach them. And last summer, too when we took kids out to *Kukuaq* and we teach them about how we used to live and let them see how we used to live long time ago and also tell them stories. What's the meaning of each traditional way of life and also, some of them, take them out on the land, teach them about what, they take them out on the land, teach them about what they used to do. And once you go out on the land away from the tents and tell them stories about what they do and then when they get back they teach the young girls how to make dry meat and also to make dry fish and to make bannock. All kinds of little things we could for survival when you out on the land. And those are the kind of things once they learn them, they are not going to forget them. And because we were out for quite awhile, they started to understand the name of things and also some of the words. And that is the reason why, to, if they don't stop those, just keep on taking them out and teaching them out on the land, they are not going to forget and they're going to remember the stories we tell them from our ancestors and that is not what they should not forget. And be able, should be able to be teached every day, that even if we don't do that, they are not going to be able to remember the language, traditional knowledge, our culture."[62]

Annie Emaghok, Tuktoyaktuk

"They would gather up people, even outside, they would have church. Well those papers, Anglican papers, they really follow them. That's when I started realizing."

"When they don't know about Minister, I think, Shaman, that what they always do. When a person get sick, those people that were shamans would start. They would make him get good, when a person get sick. That time I started realizing, people would start praying for the sick, just with prayer. When they turned away from shamans, those shamans, I never really get to understand them, yes, some of them murder people and some of them help sick, some just try to kill people."

"Young men, young girls, when their Elders is talking, when they tell them to do something, they really follow your Elders or your parents. Elders, when they tell them to do something, they would follow their words. That's how they run things, that time. Here me, *Mangilaluk* was already a Chief when I grew up. They really follow his word. Well, then they made him the Chief, they made him the leader, that's how their words were, and follow his words, whatever he said."

"Their parents, what the women want to marry, they can't marry them. The men want to marry the woman and he wants to marry won't become partners. That what, they did that to me too. Wallace found me a husband that time, in 19, what, 1951, still they used to do that. Your oldest, people that were older than us, we were told, what to do, cause we would only listen to them. While we're like that, well, then, a young man and woman, when they were little children, they were supposed to be married. When they chose them to be married, they would let them marry when they grow up. They don't follow a person's mind, which person he or she wants to marry."[63]

Jim Raddi, Tuktoyaktuk

"People don't know about cancer, that time. You know, then sickness, maybe they had cancer when they're young, but never heard of people dying off with it. Just recently, around 1950, I use to hear the sickness so powerful even medicine can't cure it. And then my grandmother died 1949 over at Sachs Harbour, the measles was so strong, it sure make some Elders suffer, the ones that never died. There were no nurses, nothing the only medicine there was Aspirin. Another one was for bad colds, Buckley cough medicine."

"That time was hard to get, nobody got any rations, family allowance was only 5 dollars a child per month. The mail was so slow coming in, only one month or month and a half. When we moved here in 1949 my life was tough but I keep still, I try and get a job anywhere. That school teacher, Miss Robinson said to me I could let you work by putting ice inside barrels and spill the garbage. I said okay. I work for six months at the school, fifty cents a day, that time, it even sound silly when I tell you about it. I used to get paid every month 15 dollars cash. I used to run home to give my Dad ten dollars and for myself five dollars. We go to store, my Dad always buy fifty pounds of flour, seven dollars and fifty cents, stuff were cheap them days. Myself I used to buy 22 shells, one or two boxes, twenty five cents, two boxes, that time. I used to just about fill up a brown paper bag, five dollars, my dad, too, ten dollars, he buy fifty pounds of flour first, then lard, and small sugar. I used to be luck that time working for school, that time, there was no rations, nothing. If you don't have a thing, you can't charge anywhere, life was sure hard them days."

"Yeah, I remember it clearly, that time I was working for the police, 1955, a plane started to land, it started to make a circle, the same time, trucks were coming from the mouth of the river, it was Northern Construction. The police told me that they're going down there to check the plane, so I went along to check for mail. We got close to the plane and near Father's house, just then, three men came off the plane. They were all holding brief cases, them white people. One of the white people asked the police, where is Father's house, Father Lemeur and Father French. The police told me, go tell the people that has a lot of kids to come to the meeting. I ran from the house telling the people about it, right away people came over. They want to give them rations. People don't understand because people never heard of rations before. The only person never got ration was *Navalok*, she was getting a cripple pension. My Dad refuse the cheque, all right, $500. They came first week of April 1955. They buy everything, clothes, grub, anything, even a rifle, they can't say no. And then, next day, my Dad, Angus Elias, Bertram Pokiak, they had big cheque, $1.75 an hour, twelve hour day, till 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning, worked one or two hours, gave them six hours overtime."[64]

Winston Moses, Inuvik

"Any ways, so I grown over the years, I stayed with my grandmother for awhile, *Stusitju*, Caroline Moses. And I used to set snares with her when I was around five years old. Tough time to set snares and she would let me set my own snares which when I catch my own rabbit she made a little feast for me. I remember that one. Rabbit. It wasn't much but made little feast anyway for whatever people gathered was there because most people was always out in the bush. Not too much in town. Nowadays everybody is in town. Nobody is in the woods except the trees and the willows. And she, we also set snares for ptarmigans. We make fence and we use babiche for snare and that was guaranteed way for catching ptarmigan to make fence. Just like in the old days, when they made fence for caribou. And also, she taught me how to set trap for muskrat. There used to be a big lake behind Old Crow and I used to set trap while she make me cut baseboard and she spring the trap because I wasn't strong enough for it. And you had to learn these things because that's your livelihood. There's no other way that you could be taught to learn to make a living because those days were for that time. As I grew up older, around eleven years old, I got my first caribou and that out in a place called Crow Flats."

"Well, you have to be taught, Because what else? Nowadays they put kids on computer when they're in grade one and that's a necessity. They have to depend on that education. Back then, that was, that was our education. If you didn't know how to do those things, you're no good for nothing. And then, when we set snares, my dad make snowshoes for me and my grandmother would make me go ahead when it's snow. She say you have to learn how to use snowshoe and when there's no trail, you have to make your own trail. It was hard sometimes, one time I crashed."

"Nowadays you have to buy in order to eat something. It's your backyard and it's not fair. Those days they make decision, when they got Chief and Council together. And they call meeting, cause I remember way back then, it almost every month they had meeting and if something emergency did pop, like say if somebody broke the law or some kind, then they come together there, too, for emergency, but those days they dealt with it. They just three them, in today's justice system, well, you go one way, you have to stand before the judge, everybody pay time. Those days they talk to you, if you do that again, well you have to do extra work in the community. Well it taught some people that, you know, to put them in their place. They start to get carried away and do their own thing but somewhere we lost that. Now as soon as little trouble you run to the law or you run to social service and they say well we can't do something about it. But them days there wasn't that much law breakers. Just because everybody look after each other. Nowadays you have to steal to eat. That sharing that we use do have it's not there anymore so they had to do something in order to get. Well, to eat or to have drink, they steal from their own kind. So that somewhere someplace we lost it. You have a pension that's when they come and visit you. The only time they get respect. Yeah. Other than that they don't see for the next month. All that law breaking and all that, abuses, you know. Alcohol abuse, solvent abuse, child abuse, we never used to have that. In any kind of native culture, we never did. Somewhere someplace it snuck in, and they think it's common."[65]

Sarah Jerome, Inuvik

"I remember my mom always telling us about the boy in the moon. Well, she was telling us about how about this boy in the moon, how he came to be on the moon. And I guess at night when we're going to bed was usually the time she tell those stories because that was the only time she had our undivided attention. Anyway, she was telling us about, I don't know how the story got started but somehow I know that the boy eventually ended up in the moon, and they didn't know where he disappeared to. And one night I guess they were looking up at the moon there, they discovered that little boy was up there. I had heard the stories before but I really don't remember all the details but I remember her just putting us bed and telling us stories and then we would take a look up at the moon and we'd see the boy in the moon, but that image of that little boy has really changed over the years, the Elders say, because since they started landing on the moon it sort of distorted the position of that little boy that was on the moon, so it's really different today."

"Well, you know, I asked my grandmother, yeah, I asked my grandmother. My grandmother lived to be the ripe old age of 106. And she died in January of 1987 and I remember asking her one time, what is it the people believed in, because I said today Anglicans, we have Roman Catholics, and there are all kinds of religions coming up into the north. And I said, what sort of a belief did you have and she said we had a belief in a God, but she said it wasn't something like the way the religion is taught today. She said it wasn't like that but always in the back of our mind was the Creator, the Creator, and they did, they were aware that was a spiritual being that they believed in but it wasn't something that they practiced like they do in the religion today."

"Not that I'm aware of, but I know that in 1985 when we first started our community assemblies in the summer time we went to this place about, how many miles is Shilti Rock, about ten miles above Fort McPherson. There's a big rock on the top of a hill and it's a square rock, and that's where, according to the legend, this man and his son went hunting up in the mountains. And at that time, when the men were out the girls were not allowed to look at the men. They were forbidden to look at the men especially if their fathers or brothers were coming back from a hunt. They are not allowed to look at them. And I guess one day her mom was telling her, your dad, and, your father and your brothers are coming back. And she was so excited about her dad and her brothers were coming home, she looked up towards that hill to see where they were and they turned into rocks. And there was, they had a dog with them so, so, there was sort of like three rocks, two or three rocks, there and a smaller one for the dog and they all turned into rocks. Because of that, but that's what happened to them, and when we had that assembly in 1985 and we decided to have it right at the foot of Shilti Rock. And the Elder that lives there, who was my godfather, told us that we should be really quiet and respectful because it's a sacred ground. And so we didn't listen to him, we just went ahead and had our loud music there and we were dancing, having baseball games, laughing, everything. The next year, the next June we were thinking of having our assembly again and during the move, when the ice was moving, that lake filled up with water. One of the organizers of the community assembly went there with, what do you call those, water pump, and he was trying to pump that water out of that lake. Not even an inch, the water never even dropped an inch. It just stayed full and we're not able to have our assembly there anymore."

"When I think back to people like Chief Julius, Old Johnny Kaye, and their Councilors, it was always people who were really influential. Like in the communities, people who were good providers, who were good hunters, who I guess the community knew would provide for the community, they were the one's. Chief Julius was a person who was a good hunter. He traded for the Bay, for the Hudson's Bay. I remember his daughter telling me that they use to, they had a store up on the Peel River. And even though he was hired by the Bay to trade for them, a lot of times, because of the people were starving, he would just give the food away and he would end up paying for it when he went back to the community through his trapping and whatever furs he got, things like that happened. People who were really good hunters and trappers, who provided well for their families, were the ones that were chosen as leaders. People who really well spoken, who knew the geography of land, where to hunt for caribou, moose, they knew where to go during the winter time, to provide for their people, those were the types of people that were picked."

"He had four Councilors, four Elders in the community who were always behind him and whenever he said to do something. For example, before all the people left, let's say after Christmas in the New year, when they were ready to all move in the mountains and they knew there were some widowers in the community who could not move. He use to, before, they move, he'd say okay, tomorrow, I want all the young men in the community to get together, go out and get wood for maybe four Elders that are going to be left. And they used to get cords and cords of wood for them before they left the community. And probably left food and that for them. And with Chief Julius he was also a Councilor because people used to go to him for counseling. If he knew that a couple out in the community were having marriage problems he would go and sit them down and talk to them. So he counsels them and he did all this work in the community. And Chief Julius was the man that knew the importance of education. He wanted his young Gwich'in people to be educated so he was the one that made the agreement with the Indian Affairs, so that they came into Fort McPherson in 1945. They built a school, the federal day school they called at that time. And that's when some of the kids used to stay in town and go to day school. While most of us were out and those that couldn't get into Aklavik, we had to stay home, and like for myself, I never went to school until I was 9 years old."[66]

Pierre Benoit, Tsiigehtchic

'Well, I'll tell a story about it. That is how come we know it. I know I used to listen to old people telling stories about way back in years. If there is no Government, nobody to tell them to do this and that, things like that. All that, old people, everybody was friendly and you know, working together, sharing everything together out in the bush, trapping and all that. If a fellow wants to trap alone, well he trap alone, he trap alone. But when we want to trap together well, they trap together with one another. All that was going on in the old days."

"They leave from here in the fall, just before freeze up, like some of them in summer time and they go as far as Thunder River and they go up, know about the freeze up time, they go up to the lake and get their fish and then trap around all over there. And it's the same thing they do like they help one another pretty good, I know everybody was friendly and everybody was happy in them days. Like as far as I remember is treaty money, that treaty money to the people. But the people didn't want to take it. They said no. They can't take it, they don't want to take in Red River here. That is what my mother was telling me about and the bishop force them to take it because the Government said if they take it, say the Government is going to look after all the people after that to get their treaty. The treaty people they'll get help and everything. And that is where they took treaty and afterwards everything went haywire later on. Yeah, people they lied. Me, I said to myself they give that treaty with lying. They'll lie about it and then they give the treaty out. Because they say they're going to help people and things like that, but no. And all this was going on. And as far as I remember, well that is that, but later on these Government people, different Government people coming in and telling you this and pretty soon meeting start and all that. And the people just keep their mouth shut too. I tell you that is no lie about that. Whatever the Government people tell them they say okay, okay that's good. And that is all they say. And they're getting into a poor life, getting into poor life later on. They find that out and then they start talking about, but its too late. You can't do nothing about it, they already talked themselves into it.

"And by that time liquor start coming in, everybody allowed to drink, treaty and all. And that's what ruined everything. Yeah, that's what ruined everything in our life, kids and all. Yeah, sometimes I think about it, boy I say, people don's say nothing about it. That is where everything goes haywire too."

"And then people come like when Inuvik start building up they start getting job and things like that. Well after its finished there is no job. And the oil company come in and that's another thing made it bad. People go down and work for the oil company and all that. And they come back with money and all that and waste money. They got liquor store and they bar right there. All that you see it made a mess of our life. And I was one of them too, yeah. And the oil camp close up well its nothing after that. People can't do nothing for themselves. There is no job, nothing. Now if you rent a house well you get a job most of the money goes to the house. And big family like that well they can't do nothing much for helping their family. That is the way I look at it myself now."

"No, there was no law until the Indian, until they passed treaty and then after that is start law. As far as I hear about it."

"That is if they agree everything together and work together I think that would be good. That is what I think. It's got to be agreement you know. You don't agree to nothing well its not very good. You know it and you see it yourself nowaday. Just like they're having meeting here. Well, sometimes I go there, no, nobody agree to everything together at all. When somebody say something wrong they argue. That's no way to make a meeting, no. You never make nothing go head way like that. Long ago Eskimo's and Gwich'in they use to fight too. They use to be against one another. I don't know why. I don't hear anything about land, but they use to fight against one another. And later on the family settled together. And now everybody there is all kinds of generation is mixed up now and you don't know who's who."

"I didn't stay in school long, too, just a year and a half, that's all. I don't know how to write when I came back. I just know how to write my name, but very poor too. I don't know how to write, but my dad used to take me out on the trap line trapping. And he used to go alone too. I used to practice some papers like that and use to read little bit, try and read, try and read. Enough so finally find out how to read and how to write. I know how to read good, but I can't really understand hard word of something like that. But writing I can't really write good. I still can't write good, some hard work, I can't write. And them days in school you don't really learn very much. You stay five years in school, some of them stay five years. Me, I just stayed a year and a half on account of my brother was drowned. My oldest brother adopted. He drowned in school so my dad took me back from school. And he start taking me out in the bush, in the bush trapping and hunting. Since nine years old I was that time. Most of the time he took me out in the bush. And summer time we don't stay in town, stay out some place fishing and when we go out some place trapping and things like that sometimes he goes alone with us kids, just us kids, my mother and that's all. Sometimes we stay alone for long time. Now I find that out, and don't want me to get mixed up with the kids, I guess, that's why he stays alone with us all the time."

"You got to talk English that's all and that is how come everybody kind of lost their language now. Yeah, that's what happened. So now they're trying to get their language back but I don't know if its going to work or not. I doubt it, cause these kids don't know how to talk Loucheux. Nowadays you get a little baby that's born well you can't talk to him in Loucheux, they just go and start with English. They don't start with Loucheux nowadays, but long ago its not like that."[67]

Alestine Andre, Tsiigehtchic

"I know that there was no structured government the way we know it today, it was something that government brought in when they came, so before that I know that the basis of everything that the Gwich'in, basis for livelihood and their way of life was based on respect, respect for animals, respect for the land, respect for each other, so respect kind of ruled everything that the Gwich'in did, whether they were old people, young people, it didn't matter and they had respect for plants and everything that they need in order to survive on the land."

"But I think the one thing I always remember really well and I don't think it will work today, but you know I'll mention it anyway because it was something that I experienced, is I remember, okay, let's say my dad came back from a hunting trip or something like that. He and my mom would talk or he would be telling my mom about all what they were, all what had happened on his trip, or if he went to town, what the news, well whatever the news was. You know, it wasn't, it wasn't gossip. I remember, it wasn't gossip, news, it was just news, news, news."

"Any laws that were laws? Oh, well, the one I know was about stepping over your brothers or your father's things, or over their legs, or over their things. Whether it's their hunting bag or their axe, their snowshoe, their shoes, their clothing, I know that was a really strong, strong kind of law, you might say. I don't know, you were just reminded, like watch where you're going, or, kind of like an immediate reprimand, verbal reprimand. And nothing, you weren't punished for walking over my brother's feet, or, we were just told to watch where you're going, or, don't walk around your, you know."

"I think it's gonna have to be, we have to have a very close examination. I think we have to kind of integrate some of the old traditional ways of our ancestors. I think because the way that is going now it's really not working. For one thing, people are still very, I think that people are still really caught between two worlds. You know, the old traditional way, and then they have this new western way of how things are done by the territorial government, by the federal government and by Yellowknife and by Inuvik, and then now by the Gwich'in Tribal Council. So, there's many different little levels of government around and I think some people are still trying to understand what's happening here, so we still have like confused people that really don't understand what the system is now. And there really needs to be, I think, two kinds of systems. One for the people that are living in because their way of thinking is very westernized, compared to say, when somebody is out on the land. That's just a complete, you could feel the transition, you know, even when you leave town and you're heading out in the bush, you're going to stay there, for whether it's two weeks, one week, couple of months, there's just a different feeling to be, to being out on the land. Then say, when you're in town because there's so many western things that, we have in town, like our stoves and our, our appliances and everything, and our TV, and everything it's very westernized. And that's the way people think in town and when you're out in the bush it doesn't matter, so I think we may have to have two sets, two sets of whatever you might call, it, for our self government because I think we still need to take care of our land and we still need to take care of the animals because even though we're in town we still depend on caribou, and we still depend on berries and other things that are out there, that is out there, waiting for us, literally. While we're busy in town, so and I know some people are not going to go back to the old way of life form, so I think if we could even adopt a little bit of, what we used to have out on the land and integrate some of that into town, I think we might have a really good chance building something that is ours and that's uniquely ours, not something that was brought in from Yellowknife or Ottawa, because we can't think of a better way, because we did have our own way, and it was based on respect and taking only what you need and all kinds of things."[68]

Eunice Mitchell, Fort McPherson

"There was a flu, a big flu. That's when my grandfather died in July. Oh, lots of people died, lots of old people died, lot of people died. That time, I wonder how old I was, about seven years old. I think how I can remember, I remember all the Elders that died. I remember after that because we lost my grandfather. We stayed with my parents, sometimes me and my grandmother stayed alone in the Delta."

"My grandmother cut up rabbit. My grandfather caught lots of rabbits… They make rabbit parkas out of this. I remember my grandfather making me, I don't remember how many, I remember wearing rabbit skin parkas. I go to the hill and slide down."

"Every morning Chief Julius directed the men where they would be going to hunt and made sure there was enough wood. They chased side by side to a certain place and killed them. When they brought the caribou in he told them, make sure the Elders and the poor get lots, he told them in a strong voice. Everyone listens. People really respected the Chief. He always talked to the men. They liked him and even hauled wood for him. When they hunt they looked after him. They really liked him. When he spoke they listened and did everything he said. What they do, he tells them all, when people are travelling with you, look after them good. Sometimes it blows in the mountains, even on grass, it is really bad, all that, he tells them to look after each other, don't get stuck, look after the poor, give them the best meat. It is really good. When I tell my kids, I sure wish for that. Even now, I still think of the mountains, even it's hard for me. All that I saw, Stony Creek, up and down river, all that, where they move. I remember when you're widow or orphan, they really looked after you and Elders was looked after. Young boys really looked after Elders. They split and cut wood. There was no chainsaw, they cut with saw. I remember small boys helped us with wood. Sometimes outside, a bit load of caribou was brought, our grandmother was looked after with meat, that's what they used to do. After that, they came to town at Easter. Big loads of dry meat, caribou skin were used, cut up good, all the cut off and cleaned and left outside for a little while and then brought it inside. Dry meat was packed into it and tied up. Some people made up seven bags. They cut bones and bone grease and *itsu*. They pound caribou legs, bone and the marrow and some marrow was used to mix with *itsu*. Woman's did good work. Caribou leg too, they cut up caribou, they dry it."

"When the men hunted, the women used to make and mend their clothes. Shoes, parkas, mitts and new shoes and new mitts, was all hanging outside, their shoes with duffles in it, hang outside. If they hunt, they bring it in and warm it and then put them on. The women respected the men. When men came back and were resting, no a woman or girl can't step over them. They respected their hunting bag, too, lots of respect, you respect the food, too. But now, you see meat in corner, blood all over, outside, too. People walking all over it. I don't like to see that, but a lot, can't say anything. I tell you young people that now, they just say I'm superstitious. I tell not say that, all that. God put us on this world for us, respect it. This is how men will always provide for us. God always provides. Hunt food, when they hunt, they bring it back, there's nothing. The balloon, you clean it and make small bags. Everything of the caribou, they use, ankle, and even caribou head skin, they make bags out of this, somebody gave me one. I put it at the Language Centre."[69]

Bella Francis, Fort McPherson

"Long time ago and today, everything is different. Everybody lived really good in those days. Nobody knew anything about government at that time. We had only our Chief and they were our boss. What they said, everyone had to listen to them. If someone had a problem, they went there and talked to them. Julius was Chief, then Johnny Kaye and Abraham Francis."

"People lived in the Delta, up the river and in the Mountains. In the summer, went to their fish camps to make dry fish and they made bales of dryfish. Some of them sell dryfish. They work with fish, enough for the coming winter. In the fall everyone start going to the mountains and they stay around there all winter. They kill caribou and they make lots of dry meat. At Easter, that's when people start coming back to town. After Easter, people start going down to the delta and also up the river. They start setting traps for muskrats. When people trapped long ago they made a good living. Things didn't cost that much in those days. Everything was cheap. Muskrat prices were good too. You bought what you needed, you can buy a canoe for hunting. They even bought kickers[70]. Those people that did good, had engines. Everybody lived good in those days. Today everything is different. People could live good but they brought liquor into the community and our young people are going the other way. If they really work towards the problems then things might be different"[71].

Amos Francis, Fort McPherson

"And, 1921, when the treaty party came in, then they officially made him Chief right till he died in 1947."

"He died in spring of 1947, that summer they were here, start to build it. That is where housing came in. They told him all his plans, what they all thought, they told him. Then he told them to get out with it. He died that summer, 1947, he died. That is where housing started. He told us people, maybe only fifty years down the line, you're going to make people lazy. He would do nothing, forty or fifty years down the line. Some people would have jobs, but all there is going to be is working for that rent. That is why I don't like it. That is where people are paying rent today, for sure."[72]

William Teya, Fort McPherson

"Every spare time old Chief got, even winter time, he sits knitting net, everybody does, it."

"You go to traps and camp down there, he tells me. Goodness sakes, I was scared, just a kid, sometimes I look at those traps and it's getting dark... next day I come back and look other lands, I go back, when I get home it's dark, he just laugh, about nine o'clock, he just laugh. I know what you're doing he said, he know it, he just laugh at me, he's scared, that's why he do that, he said... you got to learn all this, that is why I sent you out, he said, then that time he never even give me gun, too, you're not taking gun, he said. You know, that's how he teach you, in case something come, you've got to be brave... After that, he give me gun. They really taught you well them days."

"They call for him, Aklavik. He goes down with boat, they have meeting there, just like going to school, going to school. Then sometimes he takes his dogs there, one or two. They stayed down in Aklavik. Aklavik was a big place, and the police used to tell them this kind of law, and this kind of law, and then you tell your people, and he tells the people, and you know, like fur to trap this time of year, this time once with everything, that's how he got along and people listen to him. He's the big Chief."

"Lot's of Old Crow people come, they're all coming, wives and all, to old Chief, that's the first one they want to meet in town, you know them days, that's when they really respect Chief. They shake hand with them, then they talk to them, and you know, he tell what to do and don't be afraid of people, do what you want to do, you're here for a holiday, that's all they want to hear… then they're free, they're welcome into McPherson for Christmas or Easter. Nowadays, they don't even respect the Chief."

"Our river is going dry. How much could it suck water, those willows, take lots, plants. That's the reason our country is going dry, I look at it that way. Then another thing, it's getting too warm, our permafrost is thawing out."

"See kids out, on the land with people, go back out on the land. The kids can't learn in school, take them out, show them how to set traps."[73]

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Chapter 7 – Knowledge and Research

A review of pertinent literature was undertaken to communicate alternative perspectives and related issues arising from the work of researchers, scientists and philosophers engaged in the research of knowledge. Again, the content of this chapter attempts to reflect the perspectives relevant to the articulation of paradigmatic or epistemological modes of inquiry and expression within their respective contexts.

Traditional Knowledge Research in Northern Canada

> "No research is neutral, devoid of a value base or assumptions about the order of life: all research has an ideological basis. A research ideology – the body of ideas and ways of thinking held by its practitioners – is reflected in the type of research questions examined, the methodologies used, how findings are disseminated, and the sources and amounts of funding.[1]"

Traditional knowledge research began in earnest at a time when global sociopolitical pressures were prompting the recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples. Western science looked to traditional ecological knowledge as a source of information that would aid in the development of alternative ecologically sustainable resource management approaches.[2] At the same time, western scientists further distinguished traditional knowledge systems to be separate, unique and distinctive systems of knowledge, apart from western science. However, the application of the western scientific comparative method, yielding a binary opposition construct, led to the placement of traditional knowledge as existing in opposition to western science. Opposition is created with the application of a binary construct, even when there may be no opposition – without opposition there is no "conquering" or "conquest."[3] The construct of binary opposition arising from a linear hierarchical paradigm functions implicitly as a method of colonization serving to set up a "conquerer" mentality. Social scientists identify some of the categories in the relationship of traditional knowledge and western science to include: oral - written; learned through observation, experiential - learning abstracted from context; animate - inanimate; holistic - reductionist; intuitive thinking - analytical abstract reasoning; qualitative - quantitative; diachronic - synchronic; bottom up - top down; spiritual - secular; etc.[4] Although the knowledge systems are presented as exclusive to one another, they are also inclusive of one another. A side-by-side placement of the knowledge systems would translate western science and traditional knowledge as existing in a relationship of equality and balance. The predominant goal of traditional knowledge research is identified as the integration of the knowledge systems rather than their application from or within the contexts from which they emerge.

Illarion (Larry) Merculieff contends linear structures inherent to western thinking contribute to difficulties in cross-cultural communication.[5] The lack of consideration given to indigenous knowledge by western science suggests scientists consider the knowledge system held by native people to be inferior to western science. The exclusion of traditional knowledge and experience limits cultural diversity and contributes to the development of a global monoculture.[6] Alternative ways of thinking and viewing the world, as articulated from both social science and traditional knowledge, need be communicated within the communities from which they arise. In the past, native people were influenced by western scientific thought through their interactions with western educational and religious institutions. The transmission of traditional knowledge within native communities contributes to community wellness and perpetuates a unique and distinct way of viewing and interacting in the world.

The introduction of a bicultural research model to communicate the philosophy, principles and dynamics of native "science" contributed to the ongoing development of participatory action research methodologies in consultation with native communities[7]. This integration called for the recognition of alternative knowledge systems, support for cross cultural education of both Western scientists and Aboriginal peoples, and political recognition of Aboriginal land claims and resources.[8] In the North, a participatory community research methodology was undertaken by the Dene Cultural Institute to document traditional knowledge in 1989. Given the difficulties and complexities of the task, flexibility and innovation were considered as important to the research approach. Project researchers concluded, "…it should be up to the community involved to decide what information should be collected and how it should be applied."[9] For the participatory method to achieve success, "…the initiative must come from the local people. The community must assume responsibility for making decisions and assume responsibility for administering the project."[10]

In 1989 the Government of the Northwest Territories undertook to "define traditional knowledge, examine its current and potential use, and identify obstacles and solutions which will increase its influence in northern society."[11] This initiative took place in recognition that Aboriginal peoples in the North had survived for millenia "...on their knowledge, special relationships with the environment, and their ways of organizing themselves and their values..." and in consideration that in recent years, "...the assumptions, values and knowledge of Euro-Canadians have come to form the basis for most of the institutions, laws, programs, activities and policies of both government and non-government institutions."[12] In 1991, the Traditional Knowledge Working Group defined traditional knowledge as:

> Knowledge that derives from, or is rooted in the traditional way of life of Aboriginal people. Traditional knowledge is the accumulated knowledge and understanding of the human place in relation to the universe. This encompasses spiritual relationships, relationships with the natural environment and the use of natural resources, relationships between people, and is reflected in language, social organization, values, institutions and laws.[13]

The working group identified a number of issues and made related recommendations towards the integration of traditional knowledge into culturally appropriate systems that would ensure the cultural survival of Aboriginal people in the North. However, by 1997 the initiative stalled with minimal integration occurring within territorial government departments outside of renewable resource management. Bureaucratic controls and structures do not function to accommodate the changes that are necessary for the successful integration of traditional knowledge to occur.[14] Traditional knowledge research was, however, stimulated in the North. The research also determined that "most Aboriginal people possess an extensive base of non-traditional knowledge,"[15] and, that traditional knowledge includes knowledge "...which traditionally informed emotional and physical well-being, customary social values, cultural practices, and spiritual beliefs."[16]

> Traditional knowledge systems are based on the shared experiences, customs, values, traditions, subsistence lifestyles, social interactions, ideological orientations, and spiritual beliefs unique to Aboriginal communities. Together, these two foundations of knowledge articulate to form a worldview, a frame of reference, understanding, and validation, that provides meaning and value to the lives of contemporary Aboriginal people.[17]

Although traditional knowledge resides within native communities, it continues to be defined and interpreted almost exclusively by non-indigenous researchers from a western perspective[18]. Non-indigenous researchers continue to gather traditional knowledge, analyzing and classifying data to conform to prescribed paradigms and translating traditional knowledge into the discourse of western institutions. The act of definition by non-indigenous scientists minimizes and commoditizes traditional knowledge, and in turn, Aboriginal perspectives. The process of definition may be viewed as political in that elements of traditional knowledge are extracted to conform to dominant western paradigms and most often relevant specifically to environmental resource management.

Traditional environmental knowledge is gathered to supplement the existing database of western science, rather than being valued on its own merit and from a holistic perspective. The development of participatory action research methodologies ideally contributes to the development of a two-way exchange of information between academic researchers and Aboriginal communities. However, given the dominance of western intellectual and institutional processes, attempts to integrate two unique and separate knowledge systems may serve to contribute to the erosion of traditional knowledge. What is absent, and fast becoming a void of considerable breadth and depth, is the dissemination and communication of traditional knowledge back to and within Aboriginal communities. Also lacking are alternative applications utilizing traditional knowledge as a teaching tool to promote cultural continuation.

Traditional knowledge research relating to environmental assessment and co-management became a critical issue to Aboriginal organizations in Canada in light of land claims and self government negotiations. Both First Nations and Inuit voiced their concerns calling for the establishment of appropriate institutional processes that would recognize First Nations rights as partners with equal standing to that of the Canadian government in meeting their environmental stewardship obligations.[19] Recommendations posed by the Dene Research Institute highlighted the importance of Aboriginal participation in the documentation of traditional knowledge, that Aboriginal people be fully involved in the design and production of resource management regimes, and that Aboriginal parties be recognized for their equal participation, authority and legal standing.[20] Guidelines for the conduct of participatory community research during the conduct of environment assessment were developed. The Yellowknives Dene First Nation developed a Traditional Knowledge Policy relating to the use of traditional knowledge viewing traditional knowledge as a community cultural resource requiring intellectual property rights protection.[21] The Dene also sought to have traditional knowledge materials returned to their communities and for the people to be educated about traditional knowledge and the Aboriginal perception of traditional knowledge as being a community cultural resource.[22]

Participatory Action Research Framework[23]

Participatory action research evolved in Third World countries during the mid 1970's in response to the oppression of colonization and the apparent limitations of western academic research approaches. In the past twenty-five years, PAR has developed into an "approach to the creation of knowledge and improvement of life"[24] as both a philosophy and methodology to stimulate social and economic change. Participatory action research methodologies arose from the belief,

> "that people have a universal right to participate in the production of knowledge which is a disciplined process of personal and social transformation. In this process, people rupture their existing attitudes of silence, accommodation and passivity, and gain confidence and abilities to alter unjust conditions and structures."[25]

A participatory action research process is an experiential process of social change towards strengthening communities and knowledge production. "This process of participatory action-research produces knowledge based on experience: the wisdom of the people."[26] The researcher's role becomes that of a facilitator who learns to shift from a top-down approach to a bottom up approach in problem solving and communicating[27].

Susan Smith examines the philosophical foundations of participatory action research and develops a PAR methodology framework. Smith considers knowledge as contributing to our understanding of truth and reality, with research being ethnocentric and dependent upon one's ideology, values and assumptions. One's ideology is reflected in the research question, methodology and interpretation of results. The action of research is considered to reflect a paradigm within which underlying assumptions shape the research form. "A paradigm or mindset is a specific world view about the nature of society and how knowledge is produced and to be used."[28]

Dominant forms of research are identified as empirical-analytic inquiry, interpretive inquiry, and libratory inquiry. An empirical-analytical form of research is positivistic, based on observation and verification of facts, and is replicable and predictive. Interpretive inquiry examines subjective realities seeking meaning and truth yielding qualitative data to aid our understanding of the experiential. PAR is considered as a form of libratory inquiry. The process of PAR research is viewed as a transparent "living process" where participants undertake to examine their reality entering into an "action-reflection" process towards developing a "critical consciousness" invoking both personal and social transformation towards changing the status quo.[29]

The values of PAR are identified by Fals-borda to be capacity building, equitable sharing of knowledge and resources, and a commitment of all parties towards a common goal.[30] Participants contribute equitably to decision-making processes concerning allocation of resources and production and dissemination of knowledge. "Forming more democratic ways of living necessitates active attention to the distribution of power, to the relationships between individuals and groups, and to knowledge production."[31] Knowledge is power.

Practice of the PAR process invokes a practice-theory, theory-practice dialectic."[32] Ideally, the dialectical relationships within PAR evoke transformative processes leading to social and economic change. Human relationships are seen as interconnecting spheres of relationships that connect the spiritual self, with others, in relation to our universe, and with the Creator, with each sphere possessing power evolving from our "history, context, culture and personality."[33] The dialectic of our personal and social identity is understood in relation to the dialect of change through time in consideration of the dialectic of mutuality and influence to "significant actions, attitudes, thoughts and feelings."[34] The foregoing dialectical relationships are seen as either enriching or damaging to the individual, their interaction posing a foundation described as a "soul memory" which may embrace the collective[35].

Smith explains Starhawk's constructs of power being "power-over," "inner power," and, "shared power,"[36] where "power-over" exemplifies forces and processes similar to the process of colonization. This form of dominating power may result in "personal body, mind, and spirit become fragmented, manifesting in an inner violence that can have multiple symptoms of loneliness, obesity, addictions, depression, insecurity, lack of confidence, low self-esteem, passivity, and a willingness to obey."[37] Western science is considered to have "divorced spirituality from science."[38] "Inner power" is seen to come from the spirit with "shared power" being manifested by a reciprocity arising from equitable group relationships. "Shared power" is maintained and nurtured through "listening, patience, and openness."

Smith considers the praxis of the individual-group dialectic within PAR to resonate into a "spiritual journey" where the group holds "a shared truth about their reality" invoking a sense of "human humility" where "there exists one reality with multiple perceptions and interpretations of that reality."[39] All participants in the PAR process, including outside stakeholders, share a vision of social transformation. Again, the praxis of PAR is intended to shift power relations from power-over to power-within and power-with enacting social transformation and ending the cycle of domination and dependency.

Paul Freire refers to this process of "rehumanization" as "conscientization", where people "achieve a deepening awareness both of the sociocultural reality that shapes their lives and of their capacity to transform that reality."[40] Freire identifies three levels of consciousness. The first is "magical," where people internalize a context of inferiority when experiencing the reality of domination in adopting an attitude of passive acceptance while existing in a "culture of silence,"[41] (although silence may also be interpreted as censure and not acceptance). The second level of consciousness is "naïve consciousness" where people view the system as being sound and viable, often engaging within the system to become a part of the dominant group, or working from within (a hierarchical system) to alter the (hierarchical) system. "Critical consciousness" is the third level, where individuals achieve an awareness of oppression and reject the constraints previously imposed upon them and gaining freedom or autonomy.[42]

The praxis of dialogue stimulates an awareness of the need for transformation while addressing social forces. New perspectives emerge and are expressed through a dynamic of culture, language, and work. Smith contends a holistic PAR model will allow for the foregoing dialectical relationships to occur while incorporating "people as complex beings with differing motivations, individual capabilities, feelings with varying moments of joy and anguish; multiple relations to each other; and shared needs for community and common effort."[43] "A PAR framework has cumulative moments of knowing self, seeking connections, grounding in context and focussing on fundamental needs, beginning praxis, experiencing conscientization, and awakening."[44] The framework for PAR is seen to begin at the level of the individual where there is a "quest of being" to know self, followed by the seeking of connections and building of trust and solidarity. The grounding context of human needs elicits praxis followed by conscientization, awakening and transforming, which repeats itself as social change occurs. Smith's PAR framework stimulates an energy at the level of the individual which builds upon itself contributing to the energy of the collective.

For the PAR researcher, "The task of the writer is documentation: to represent an experience as fully and truthfully as possible"[45]. The documentation of PAR is considered representative when it: "places the experience in context"; "details the experience," "reveals and reflects on emergent knowledge"; and, "reveals personal transformation."[46] The study of "spiritual science" incorporating a "compassionate consciousness"[47] is considered by Smith to inform libratory inquiry research through the "spirit energy of humanness" requiring the documentation and interpretation of PAR "to capture all rational, emotional, spiritual, and practical movement."[48] The foundation of PAR rests on the premise that PAR contributes to capacity building towards community development. Arturo Ornelas considers one of the difficulties with a participatory action research process to occur when process functions as a product oriented action, rather than allowing for transformative processes to occur.[49]

Framework of Anthropological Research

> There is a key difference between Aboriginal and mainstream academic approaches to knowledge: In academic writing, the rule is that authors do not identify their voices. They speak from a pedestal of knowledge. The individual speaking is not a central part of that knowledge nor is he or she actively involved in the knowledge he or she has produced. The knowledge is outside of the self.[50]

Anthropology is a discipline that studies humankind from a holistic perspective. The history of anthropology is a reflection of the history of humankind, that of the western intellectual tradition, from the discipline's beginnings in the mid to late 1800's. Anthropology emerged as discipline at a time when Europeans were traversing the globe discovering "primitive" peoples. The notion of "discovery" and its inception as an "empirical science" led to the study of people and cultures from a scientific perspective.

These faraway places became the "field" from which those who traveled the world returned with new information about other places, people and cultures. Europe had become the center of the world, the point of origin, from whence people and ideas radiated outward to the periphery of the "other." "The history of anthropology, then, is really the history of values in the world, particularly the Western world."[51] As with all disciplines, it becomes necessary to study the history of the world to understand the history of the discipline. World historical events impacted on external and internal social systems at the time of "discovery," that, along with the migration and subsequent dispersion of ideas, interacted to shape anthropology's theoretical foundation.

Bohannon and Glazer identify the following elements of human culture to have contributed to the development of the ideas that merged to become anthropological theory, or, "the science of culture."[52] Science, being empirical, necessitates the study "of" from a scientific perspective that is itself bound within a formulaic equation of binary opposition thus necessitating the enactment and employment of a comparative method of analysis. Anthropology also rests upon ideas of structure, that of social structure and deep structure or hidden meaning, that together shape how we perceive the world as human beings. The element of time is considered as an important dimension since events occur in real time since anthropological studies concentrated on specific segments, or synchronic time, while history provided us with a diachronic perspective, through chronological or linear time. Symbolism, representative of the hidden structure of linguistic communication as encoded within human beings and allowing for the capacity to speak and communicate using words and language, is considered to be important to culture. Space is also an important referent in anthropology in that our perceptions are shaped by our physical space. These ideas came together to serve as a lens through which anthropology perceives, views and seeks to better understand humankind. Anthropology may be thought of as the study of thought, conceptualization, perception, and vision of both the tangible and intangible. For what is conceptualized through the understanding of the beholder; anthropology offers an array of corrective perceptual lens.

A problematic area within anthropology is that study is premised on the scientific within which the value of objectification generated from a hierarchical and value specific underpinning resides. Anthropological study presumes ownership predisposing the manifestation of the presentation of an illusion that shimmers synchronically and diachronically to become perceived as factual reality caught in time. An rhetoric of internal academic debate shields closer examination and prevents the revealing of the many tricks and nuances at play. The static nature of written text captures moments in time preserving them into perpetuity and distorting our perception of the here and now. We cling to the equation, if this, then that. The gathering of data generates out of necessity the construction of vast storehouses of bounded knowledge and collection of physical objects to preserve and protect, to contribute to our understanding of humankind. We take all the pieces and put them together constructing a cohesive whole, and deconstruct taking everything apart to reconstruct into a cohesive whole.

From Herbert Spencer's theory of evolution to Henry Morgan's classificatory kinship systems, to Emile Durkheim and Marcel Mauss' "primitive" classificatory systems of cognitive classes, and Victor Turner's rites of passage from separation to liminality to communitas, one can trace the journey from looking outward from within, to looking outward and probing within.[53] The journey mirrors that of colonial expansion from Europe to an inward probing of cultural epistemologies and on into an exploration of the realm of the multi-dimensional.

Several early anthropologists contributed to the holistic perceptual construct of anthropology. Franz Boas advocated the adoption of a holistic approach that saw the bringing together of the four sub-fields of anthropology to investigate culture. Boas' major contribution to the discipline of anthropology is reflected in the concept of "cultural relativism" where all cultures are viewed as equal and comparable.[54] He was considered to be an "empiricist" who set new standards for collecting ethnographic data advocating for the collection of ethnographic data that stressed the study of the formation and history of customs in a total culture area.[55] Boas influenced the work of several anthropologists who worked with him. Edward Sapir stressed the relationship between culture and language viewing language as a way of thinking. He applied a scientific methodology of linguistic analysis to ascertain meaning that he presumed lay hidden in the deep structure of language.[56] By understanding languages, anthropology would be better able to understand culture. Alfred Kroeber focused on culture and the levels of organization and abstraction that were connected and operant in form, function and structure therein. He also looked at the analysis of scientific methodology comparing scientific thought to the analysis of culture using linguistic phenomena and language as data.[57] A holistic approach involved continuing the investigation into the deeper levels of language and thought that were perceived as underlying culture.

Benjamin Lee Whorf's interest in linguistics and subsequent research followed the basic tenets as previous determined by Sapir and Boas. Sapir's study of deep structure through linguistic analysis served as a tool for Whorf to look for the deeper meaning he felt existed in the inherent connection of language and thought. Cultural relativism formed the foundation of his analysis in that he perceived each language as affording the speaker with a unique perception of the world, that perception being determined through language and thought.[58] Whorf studied the Hopi language and authored "An American Model of the Universe" exploring "the implications of the Hopi verb system with regard to the Hopi perception of time and space."[59] Language may be considered as the nucleus from which our perception of the world is constructed. Whorf proposed all languages are equally valid with individuals of each culture perceiving the world according to a worldview as structured by their own language.[60] This theory of "linguistic relativism" was partially compatible to Boas' earlier theory of "cultural relativism" which considered all the world's cultures to be unique. Whorf stressed the relationship between language and culture and viewed language as a way of thinking. He sought for a deeper level meaning he felt existed in the inherent connection of language and thought. Cultural relativism formed the foundation of his analysis in that he perceived each language as affording the speaker with a unique perception of the world, that perception being determined through language and thought.[61]

It is interesting to note the contributions of these early anthropologists towards our understanding of epistemology and the ways in which language and culture shape our cognitive worldview, perceptions and interactions in our worlds. Early anthropology moved from an outwards perspective to an inner perspective, from observation and description, toward an internal examination of inner and hidden levels and layers of language, thought and meaning. Clifford Geertz considered culture to perhaps exist "in the minds and heart of men."[62] He suggested that what is considered as data is "really our own constructions of other people's constructions."[63] The mid-eighties saw the emergence of a shift from theoretical debate to a "crisis of representation" as human social scientists began to reflect upon methodology and epistemology, interpretation and representation.[64]

We are taught that Europe "discovered" America, however there is little mention in anthropological textbooks or classrooms of the contributions of indigenous people to the theoretical foundations of the discipline. To suggest that the central element of early anthropological theory derives from Aboriginal/European interaction is hardly shocking. What is perhaps most disturbing, is that as Aboriginal people have begun to use the same basic concepts to express their sense of themselves in contemporary contexts in which opportunities to speak have emerged, some anthropologists have announced the death of "culture" and the holistic interpretive models of culture that typified the discipline in the past.[65]

Indigenous Knowledge and Indigenous Research Issues

Graham Hingangaroa Smith discusses transformative processes undertaken by the Maori towards protecting and respecting indigenous knowledge in New Zealand, where indigenous knowledge has become somewhat "commodified." Smith calls for indigenous people to engage in positive, proactive initiatives and actions to set the agenda for change for themselves. The Maori have initiated a range of educational and schooling initiatives towards transforming their lives in response to a crisis of language loss and educational underachievement in their communities. The Maori have adopted the position that indigenous academics and indigenous people work together on behalf of the people. Through this exercise, "Maori have attempted to reclaim research, teaching, and theory within the realm of Maori knowledge frameworks."[66] The investigation of theory is seen as an important aspect of moving towards the development of understandings based in indigenous knowledge as an impetus for transformative action. Smith considers the contemporary focus on individual rights and freedoms to be in conflict with and undermine the collective solidarity that is central to indigenous communities. According to Smith, New Zealand "...has become a 'laboratory' for an extensive experiment in free-market economics...." which has ...moved us away from the object of a collective concern to provide 'equal opportunity for all' to an individualistic notion of 'the survival of the fittest'."[67]

The commodification of indigenous knowledge is achieved through compartmentalization. Smith cites the example of the Qualifications Authority in New Zealand who were given the responsibility for Maori curriculum development and Maori teacher certification. The result was that curricula developed by Maori thinkers is now owned by the Qualifications Authority and not the Maori who shared their indigenous knowledge. In addition, the authority now certifies Elders as instructors. Curriculum development and certification of teachers is controlled by a government agency.

The Maori consider the revitalization of their language and culture to be of the utmost importance.[68] They have developed a preschool program focused on the revitalization of the Maori language in connection with the building of new family relationships. They have reorganized methods of evaluation and have prioritized Maori indigenous knowledge together with traditional Maori teaching methods. They have also put in place a cultural support network as a form of socioeconomic intervention towards applying the traditional Maori practice of nurturing their children. The extended family of the child is culturally contracted to fulfill certain cultural obligations in support of the Maori education system. By reclaiming their educational system through a transformative approach, the Maori are beginning to achieve the revitalization of their language and culture.

Linda Tuhiwai Smith believes indigenous people have an alternative story to tell, about "…the history of Western research through the eyes of the colonized."[69] Today, indigenous researchers are actively participating in indigenous research, the development of indigenous research protocols and methodologies, and in developing ethical guidelines and policies about research to controlling the research agenda and uses of indigenous knowledge. Smith cautions "research is not an innocent or distant academic exercise but an activity that has something at stake and that occurs in a set of political and social conditions."[70] Although researchers may be indigenous, most receive their training in western institutions. Indigenous researchers are faced with a number of ethical, cultural, political and personal issues while conducting research, and are often marginalized as being both insiders and outsiders. She considers indigenous research to be a "humbling activity." Smith explores the relationship between imperialism, research, and knowledge, and examines alternative approaches and methodologies that ensure that research serves indigenous people.

Major research issues are identified through questions asked of the researcher:

> "Whose research is it? Who owns it? Whose interests do you serve? Who will benefit from it? Who has designed its questions and framed its scope? Who will carry it out? Who will write it up? How will its results be disseminated? Is her spirit clear? Does he have a good heart? What other baggage are they carrying? Are they useful to us? Can they fix our generator? Can they actually do anything?"[71]

Issues important to indigenous researchers include being judged on insider criteria such as family background, status, gender, etc. Most frustrating is the tendency for indigenous communities to prefer to use the services of non-indigenous researchers over those of indigenous researchers based on "a deeply held view that indigenous people will never be good enough," may reveal confidences, or have a hidden agenda.[72] Smith writes from the position of an indigenous Maori woman from New Zealand who claims "a genealogical, cultural and political set of experiences" based on extended family and spiritual relationships.[73]

In her discussion of academic writing, Smith considers having to exclude herself from academic texts in which such words as "we," "us," "our," and "I" are used because they exclude her as an indigenous person.

> "Much of what I have read has said that we do not exist, that if we do exist it is in terms which I cannot recognize, that we are no good and that what we think is not valid... Reading and interpretation present problems when we do not see ourselves in the text."[74]

The task of academic writing for indigenous people is further complicated in that we may assume uncritically similar patterns of writing, render ourselves invisible or unimportant, reveal ourselves in ways that may be used against us, legitimate views about ourselves that are hostile to us, or, appropriate the language of the colonizer. Smith considers Edward Said's questions: "Who writes?, For whom is the writing being done?, and In what circumstances?[75]. Although imagination is considered important to literary writing, "the use of language is not highly regarded in academic discourses which claim to be scientific."[76]

The challenge to indigenous researchers is to demystify and decolonize research by sharing with their communities the theories and analyses that inform knowledge.

Indigenous people in communities who are not considered as researchers conduct research using methodological processes and applying methods that are informed by theory. Smith argues the importance of theory to indigenous people as a method that assists us to plan, strategize and assume control, as a way of organizing and determining action, and to predict outcomes and protect us, while allowing for the incorporation of new ideas. In order to make sense of our world we need to recover our history, stories, language and epistemological foundations towards a reconciliation and understanding of our own concerns, worldviews and perspectives.

Towards decolonizing methodologies and setting a new agenda, Smith articulates an agenda for indigenous research focused on the goal of self-determination for indigenous peoples. The research agenda is based on a metaphor of ocean tides with the four directions being represented by the processes of decolonization, healing, transformation and mobilization. These processes may be incorporated into research practices and methodologies. Communities are expected to move through the states of survival, recovery, and development, concurrent with movement through the processes towards a goal of self-determination.

An indigenous research agenda may be incorporated through either community-based research or through institutional indigenous based research. Community action research is social research at the community level that seeks to make a positive contribution to the community. This type of research allows for indigenous people to work as researchers and assumes "...that people know and can reflect on their own lives, have questions and priorities of their own, have skills and sensitivities that can enhance (or undermine) any community based projects."[77]

> "In all community approaches *process* – that is methodology or method – is highly important. In many projects the process is far more important than the outcome. Process are expected to be respectful, to enable people, to heal and to educate. They are expected to lead one small step further towards self-determination."[78]

In New Zealand, the Maori have undertaken research in the areas of resource management, economic development, health, education, justice, family and children, flora and fauna and traditional knowledge. A Maori research centre has undertaken archival and historical research, social impact analysis, oral histories and local development. Tribal research practices include the processes of consultation, collective meetings, open debate and shared decision making.[79]

The training of indigenous researchers is important to address the needs of Maori research however ...", not at cost of destroying people's indigenous identities, their languages, values and practices."[80] The Maori have established a number of academic programs which focus on the development of action research skills through specific research tasks including literature reviews, data entry, transcribing, data analysis, conducting interviews and proposal and report writing. Smith contends indigenous researchers require sophisticated skills and an awareness of the larger picture of research accompanied by a critical analysis of their own processes to mediate and work within the dynamics of indigenous communities.

Indigenous researchers conducting insider research need to develop their own reflexivity, to have research-based support systems, relationships with their communities, and a clearly defined research goal.[81] Insider research needs to be ethical, respectful, reflexive, critical and humble. Often, an indigenous researcher will be called upon to test their own taken for granted views of their community which may result in the unsettling of the researcher's beliefs, values and relationships. Community members expect open and good intentions and honesty and respect from indigenous insider researchers.

Indigenous research is considered as a highly political activity, (as is any research), requiring the negotiation and transformation of institutional practices and research frameworks, in addition to carrying out the actual research program.[82]

Situated Knowledge, A Place To Speak From

Smith's approach is consistent with that of the feminist philosopher Donna Haraway. Haraway distinguishes "situated knowledges" in the realm of an epistemology "policed by philosophers codifying cognitive canon law"[83] where techno-monsters pursue the illusory objective of objectivity. When "others" foray into this realm "self-induced personality disorders" may result from this "epistemological electroshock therapy" where pertinent issues relate more to politics and ethics than epistemology.[84] Speaking from a feminist perspective, Haraway notes,

> "we do need an earthwide network of connections, including the ability to translate knowledges among very different – and power-differentiated – communities. We need the power of modern critical theories of how meanings and bodies get made, not in order to deny meanings and bodies, but in order to build meanings and bodies that have a chance for life."[85]

She distinguishes a dichotomy of "radical constructivism versus feminist critical empiricism,"[86] suggesting we access the tool of "vision" to avoid binary oppositions.

Positioned from the alternative perspective of feminism, Haraway offers: "Feminist objectivity means quite simply situated knowledges."[87] Situated knowledges arise from the contention that "only partial perspective promises objective vision," in that, "…feminist objectivity is about limited location and situated knowledge."[88] Embodying feminist objectivity would begin with the acknowledgement that we see the world through our eyes, as "active perceptual systems" that function by "….building on translations and specific ways of seeing, that is, ways of life."[89] What we can see are "…only highly specific visual possibilities, each with a wonderfully detailed, active, partial way of organizing worlds…of elaborate specificity and difference…from which may we begin to learn "…from another's point of view."[90] For those who are less powerful and who inhabit the realm of subjugated positions under the microscope wielded by critical inquiry, "the standpoints of the subjugated" become preferred standpoints being,

> "less likely to allow denial of the critical and interpretive core of all knowledge. They are knowledgeable of all modes of denial through repression, forgetting, and disappearing acts – ways of being nowhere while claiming to see comprehensively."[91]

The trick becomes how to see from a subjugated standpoint. "The alternative to relativism is partial, locatable, critical knowledges sustaining the possibility of webs of connections called solidarity in politics and shared conversations in epistemology."[92]

From her position, Haraway observes, "…it is precisely in the politics and epistemology of partial perspectives that the possibility of sustained, rational, objective inquiry rests"[93]. She argues "…for a doctrine and practice of objectivity that privileges contestation, deconstruction, passionate construction, webbed connections, and hope for transformation of systems of knowledge and ways of seeing..."[94] "Vision is always a question of the power to see – and perhaps of the violence implicit in our vision practices. She queries, "With whose blood were my eyes crafted?"

> "The split and contradictory self is the one who can interrogate positionings and be accountable, the one who can construct and join rational conversations and fantastic imaginings that change history. Splitting, not being, is the privileged image for feminist epistemologies of scientific knowledge. "Splitting" in this context should be about heterogeneous multiplicities that are simultaneously salient and incapable of being squashed into isomorphic slots or cumulative lists. This geometry pertains within and among subjects. Subjectivity is multidimensional; so, therefore, is vision. The knowing self is partial in all guises, never finished, whole, simply there and original; it always constructed and stitched together imperfectly, and therefore able to join with another, to see together without claiming to be another. Here is the promise of objectivity: a scientific knower sees the subject position, not of identity, but of objectivity, that is partial connection...." "Vision requires instruments of vision; an optics is a politics of positioning. Instruments of vision mediate standpoints; there is no immediate vision from the standpoints of the subjugated. Identity, including self-identity, does not produce science; critical positioning does, that is objectivity.[95]

Haraway views the struggle for positioning, determining what counts as knowledge, as a struggle of how "to see," and arguing for "...politics and epistemologies of location, positioning, and situating...."[96]. She suggests that would we look to see where we situate ourselves, "...we will find metaphors and means for understanding and intervening in the patterns of objectification in the world – that is, patterns of reality for which we must be accountable."[97] "Translation is always interpretative, critical and partial."[98] The production of knowledge and its relationship with science is one of an ideological struggle for dominating interests where knowledge becomes matter through the act of the knower.[99]

> "Positioning is, therefore, the key practice in grounding knowledge organized around the imagery of vision, and much Western scientific and philosophic discourse is organized this way...." "That is, admitted, or not, politics and ethics ground struggles over knowledge projects in the exact, natural, social, and human sciences."[100]

It is just such positioning that typifies much Aboriginally directed and initiated research. Canadian native anthropologist Dawn Hill undertook to study resistance in the fourth world context of an Aboriginal community for her doctoral dissertation research. For Hill, being Native influences our participation and representation in collaborative and fieldwork research. In her discussion of the conflict of western and native thought, Hill considers "As a native woman 'other' in anthropology, I know that even my voice is inherently obscured and consumed in the discourse of my 'other'."[101] "The key is to not be consumed by the hegemonic or to alienate myself in either world, and more importantly, to redefine my role as an anthropologist."[102]

Within native communities, a circular paradigm encompasses the collective consciousness of the people with spirituality being central to understanding of the holistic relationship of the social, ceremonial, economic and political spheres. Ceremonies are seen as reproducing and reaffirming native identity. Hill explores issues related to the construction of a native paradigm where "the physical, spiritual, meta-physical are realities coexisting within a holistic framework,"[103] where learning is cumulative and "inquiry is defined by several truths that one must be prepared to accept."[104] It is critical to accept the indigenous assumption of coexisting realities where "it is a real event to engage in a dialogue with the spirit world."[105] "Native science contextualizes the spoken word as fact and places the experiences of the people as a social truth."[106]

"Native science" struggles with respect. Respect for the words of our Elders, the struggles of our people, and the struggle to communicate without sacrificing context for definition. These struggles were all engaged in the self government research I have reported on. Self-reflection must be critical and constructive. In a foregoing chapter, I have attempted to offer a critique that recognizes the urgency for Aboriginally guided research, and recognition of the places where respect can be compromised to such urgency.

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Chapter 8 – Side by Side at the River Pathways

At the Meeting Place

We arrive back at the starting point of our journey around a circle pathway of assumptions. To begin it became necessary to find a voice from which to speak in the writing of this work. There are so many voices with which we may speak. How to talk? I may speak with my mind and my heart. Aboriginal students listen to the voices of many people when studying at post secondary institutions. Only a distorted echo tells us about our past. We each come to explore ourselves in the history of our families and our people. In searching for ourselves we find ourselves inside the labels of the history of colonization that remains reflected in the lives of Aboriginal people in Canada and indigenous peoples elsewhere in the world today. I speak as a Metis woman. I wished to maintain integrity of voice and self.

I honour the voices of educators, Elders and scholars who are intimately familiar with the teaching and learning of philosophy and epistemology. Their words are so few, we may never hear them, given a politics of exclusion within the realm of knowledge. Yet they help us to understand and accept who we are and where we come from, to become. Yes, we say, yes. The words you are saying are real and true. And we see ourselves inside the pictures you are making for us on the pages you are writing on. Yes, we have shared in the sorrow and the pain and we feel the power, strength and beauty. To understand, give us hope to heal and become, to be real again. We are presented with an opportunity to learn in university classrooms.

The indigenous voices express a vision of indigenous education based on an indigenous epistemology that calls for the development and implementation of educational programs that will serve the needs of indigenous learners. An Elder tells us the role of language, culture, and traditions are critical to indigenous epistemology and pedagogy and calls for the revitalization of indigenous languages and articulation of indigenous methodologies by indigenous students. Spirituality and ceremony are language and culture, culture and language are spirituality and ceremony. Language and culture heal individuals and communities. Educators explore alternative ways for teaching and learning towards the transmission of indigenous knowledge within western knowledge systems. Native writers transmit orality and share teachings through their writings of creativity and expression of difference.

The history of colonization is reflected in the cognitive colonization of indigenous peoples and mirrored in a history of racism. The power relations of politics and epistemology interact to form jagged worldviews that impose a tension within Aboriginal peoples' lives. Canada's educational system is seen to function as a tool of colonialism to create a state of cognitive imperialism in Aboriginal students. There is no clear vision of identity and students who are seeking to learn develop "split heads," uncertain of their positioning in the larger picture. The traumatic experience of colonialism is seen to inflict a soul wound to the consciousness of Aboriginal people that manifests through negative self-destructive behaviors in our people and our communities. The affects of colonialism on indigenous peoples prompt the engagement of healing, to remember and to know, to become ourselves.

We exist from afar caught within the pages of the books captured from the perspectives of those who aid our understanding of a politics without ethics. History has caught our relations and unfolds in a series of sociopolitical processes that continue to impact our communities today. We visit with the residents of the Beaufort/Delta region in the Northwest Territories, Inuvialuit and Gwich'in, the First Peoples. Today we demonstrate our honour and respect through recognition of Aboriginal people and their inherent rights. These words are played out in the frameworks of land claims and self government negotiations in the region, though the scope of negotiations is determined by the Government of Canada. A community profile relates changing population demographics and provides an overview of the status of education, culture and social issues in Beaufort/Delta communities during the past decade.

The framework and scope of self government negotiations were enacted through a process of community consultation initiated in the region between 1997 and 1999. A Fieldwork Program functioned to communicate the status of negotiations to residents in the region. Inuvialuit and Gwich'in Community Fieldworkers conducted a self government survey of community households and completed a traditional governance research project with Inuvialuit and Gwich'in Elders. I share my reflections concerning my experiences while participating in these processes. Self government negotiators are attempting to integrate Inuvialuit and Gwich'in traditional forms of governance into the existing public system of government.

A glimpse of Inuvialuit and Gwich'in traditional leadership practices are accessed from historical documentation although population decimation from death and disease contributed to an unfathomable loss of traditional knowledge amongst the Inuvialuit and Gwich'in populations. Aboriginal perspectives of traditional leadership and indigenous governance are offered as alternatives to public government. Portions of Elder interview transcripts relate Inuvialuit and Gwich'in Elder perspectives of traditional ways of governance as experienced by the Elders prior to and during the arrival of government to the Beaufort/Delta region.

Traditional knowledge activities in the North are intended to facilitate the integration of traditional knowledge with western science. In consideration that the Beaufort/Delta Fieldwork program was premised on a Participatory Action Research towards community development, the PAR framework is reviewed from a social science perspective. Anthropological contributions to research and our understanding of knowledge are considered based on the works of early theoreticians to the discipline. Indigenous knowledge research issues are discussed from the perspective of Maori researchers who control the research process and conduct Maori research. To enter into an academic dialogue necessitates awareness of epistemological tensions relating to politics and ethics, representation, analysis and interpretation as envisioned from a feminist philosopher. The discussion brings to light the obligation of discourse participants to situate knowledges by distinguishing the positions of those involved. To speak clearly and with integrity necessitates the positioning of oneself to avoid a subjective-objective dialectic. The further one moves away from objectification the closer we come to clear vision.

The reflective exercise on my participation in the self government negotiations relates my perceptions concerning the facilitation of the Fieldwork Program and subsequent related problematic areas from the perspective of my participation in the process. Political and ethical considerations arise relating to the application of a PAR process that did not function within a PAR framework. Epistemological tensions, power relations, colonial attitudes and project constraints arose from the positioning of an objective-subjective dialectic from which a reflective consciousness or praxis could not emerge. A research process initiated from outside of the communities yielded answers that were not being sought. The Elders are talking from their culture and that is the message, that self government must come from their culture.

The community consultation process revealed there to be a very significant communication and cultural gap between self government negotiations and community residents. The superficial application of a PAR process during self government negotiations is seen as covertly undermining the stated intention of self government negotiations. Traditional governance project results suggest Inuvialuit and Gwich'in cannot maintain and protect their language, culture and traditions in the proposed self government model within the existing public system of government. However, alternative indigenous epistemologies as voiced and envisioned by indigenous educators, Elders and scholars, together with alternative Aboriginal leadership and indigenous governance models, would suggest Inuvialuit and Gwich'in self government could be founded upon Inuvialuit and Gwich'in culture and traditions, rather than that of a colonialist public government system founded upon a epistemological tradition that remains contrary to indigenous self government and indigenous knowledge systems.

Parts Together Coming Whole

My approach to this work began with a circle leading to a pathway of assumptions to guide the reader through this journey. The journey began with struggling to find a voice with which to speak, to speak and not be representative of anyone else. Although rife with epistemological tension and distortion, the experience of attending university has been pivotal in inspiring my own journey of healing towards wellness. Not seeing myself or my relations reflected back to me in the classrooms of the University, or the literature in the libraries, motivated me to embark on a journey of learning and discovery. Ultimately I was welcomed by the Aboriginal community on campus as a friend and family member into a circle of teaching, learning, healing and growth and sharing, tremendously enhanced my quality of life.

To write is to reflect upon truth and try to create a reflection that does not distort. It is a reflective action, necessitating one to access a high degree of wellness in order to be able communicate. In the end the words are static on the page, representative of moments in this time, to be rewritten in a different way in a different time. To tell the story, in the way I felt needed to be told, meant going to many people and many places, in an attempt to bring together some of the pieces that contribute to becoming. The story reflects many interactions interconnected across many dimensions that impact on our lives.

The exercise of labeling brings into question one's identity, especially when the labeling is determined outside of oneself. The use of derogatory terms negates, minimizes and diminishes us. These terms confuse our perception of self, serve to separate the pieces that make up the whole, silencing our articulation and any acceptance of a shared world view, or awareness of the dissimilar and unique, that exists, separate and apart from, a dominant world view based on a colonial epistemological foundation. To be different. My experiences have been part of and apart from and so I must speak from where I stand. We are compelled to identify ourselves for fear of total erasure, to stand and say I am here, to position ourselves and speak from where we are situated to share our perceptions and our experiences in a world of competing ideologies where the lines of politics and ethics blur causing our perceptions to become distorted, so we no longer know from where we speak, or to whom, or of whom, until we erase ourselves from the picture stories in the books that record history.

I honour my family and my ancestors. It was important for me to find them. We are a reflection of Canadian history – the Metis. It is important to place myself within the web of interconnecting relationships of my ancestors. For it is the path of our ancestors footsteps upon which we walk, of who we are, and where the future will come. My family relationships and their connection to the land contribute to my identity as a Metis woman. My family relations form linkages to different places and inter-connections with many people and communities. I honour my relations.

I know little about these people, about their lives and how they lived, about their dreams or sorrows. As a child I came to understand that one did not speak of these things, about these people, about the past. It was best not to remember, to forget. Yet with forgetting there is no history. There is a deep sorrow that goes with forgetting. We were not this, and we were not that, we could not be here and we could not be there, yet we were. As each name came, with each picture, with each little story, I could come to be. There is healing in sharing and remembering, in becoming, and being.

Shame is an inter-generational teaching, one we are barely cognizant of, one that is passed down from generation to generation. And so we become of ashamed of who are and we suffer ourselves. And we unwittingly share this teaching with children through our thoughts and words and actions. We ignore reality as though it were a shameful something to be tucked away in a murky half remembered past considered to be romantic illusion under the covert dictates created by a racist fantasy. We don't have to eradicate. There remains the option of transmission and being.

There is a place of shadow, darkness, alienation, loneliness and discontent. Once relegated to this space, we seek its comfort when we are wounded. It is a space of confinement, born of pain, sorrow, anger and confusion. Violence, rage, depression and despair. It tears our heart and diminishes our spirit, threatening our existence. To fear memory, or forgetting to remember, to ignore what was and what is. Protective mechanisms kick in. This where one submerges oneself in a clear still pool of water; I went home. Walked in moccasins to weathered gray wooden crosses etched with names, I cannot read, granite headstones, unmarked graves. Went down hill, where I always go, river. Bitter drops slipped, traced. I cannot see, water, rapids are hidden, covered outer shell, frozen ice, dark frigid cold water moving below, rushing over glacier carved quartzite rock, snow.

Alternatively, we may shroud ourselves in rhetoric, to aptly parry, poke or play, to demonstrate our situated positioning, command of the situation, to distinguish our agility, ability and capability to succeed in the game. Knowing propels us forward towards the choice of alternative ways of being. There is also a place of breath and life in the journey towards power, strength and beauty. Yet, there remained a knowing of power, strength and beauty that could not be diminished by a carefully constructed reality built upon a socio-cultural political historical fantasy created to lull us into complacency and dull our senses and our very beings, diminishing our essence with each passing decade. Until we remain only echoing footnotes of fading memory of what maybe, might have, used to and cannot be. This could not be.

And so I sought to learn the teachings of the knowledge of the people who are my ancestors, and I am humbled and awestruck and bidden. I listen to what the Elders are saying. I listen to the words of the indigenous educators. They tell us about colonization and its insidious seepage to cognitive imperialism. The very ways of the thinking and thoughts of the colonizers enter our minds to become our thoughts so that we may lose ourselves to walk amongst the legions of the colonized where difference equates with devaluation. And with the docile acceptance of this dominant programming mode we forget our history, forget our past, forget our people and survive, a member of the accepted dominating norm.

To survive requires an acceptance of oneself as one is. To rediscover one's history, understand the past, celebrate tradition and participate in ceremony, to honour and respect oneself for whom one is. They say to walk your talk. Be aware of where you situate yourself, to be clear in where you stand and of whom and from where one speaks. Are the words from yourself, or are their mirroring and reflecting others words and thoughts? Or will you speak connecting mind and heart? Tell us so we know.

Self government negotiations take place within a realm of power relations, political, legal, epistemological and ethical, as is evident upon review of the foregoing sections concerning the Beaufort/Delta region. To understand colonization, one must be aware of history because history reflects colonization. It was an awesome, challenging and rewarding experience to work with the Inuvialuit and Gwich'in Community Fieldworkers. These are memories I am grateful for. The experience led me to better understand the impact external forces continue to have on people's lives and to perceive the ease with which we are drawn into existing processes which supercede all else.

Yet there exist alternatives when we situate ourselves in the broader picture. For Aboriginal people negotiating self government, the trail continues to be fraught with peril. Time will pass one day onto the next. In the end, what is important is having maintained the cultural traditions and ways of life of the people, to have maintained the integrity of the epistemological foundation upon which the construction of knowledge rests. Not to be subsumed and consumed by dominant processes which impart an epistemological violence and enact a soul wound that cannot heal, rather, to demonstrate honour and respect for oneself, and to unequivocally state and practice traditional and indigenous ways of governance.

And this seemingly takes place while we sit in front of a computer entering our thoughts and words, deconstructing and reconstructing, woven to fit into the compartments to enact the logic of equation. A flat linear surface, words on paper in a book on a shelf. We are confounded when something doesn't fit. What? Can't contain it, makes no sense. There is something wrong. Re-evaluate and re-create the criteria to selectively deny and omit. If it is not scientific and it is isn't factual and it doesn't conform to dominant values or meet mutually agreed upon, and thereby dominant, standards, then it doesn't make sense. Disregard that. Then, the equation is delicately balanced, but then, and it collapses in on itself leaving you where you started in the first place. And yet it remains, words on paper, then. To forget. To remember, and forget. And then we've lost a part of ourselves, only to find it and put the words on paper in a book on a shelf. To remember and forget. It is in the forgetting that we lose our history. Yet, it may be that we may recover some of the parts of ourselves that have gone missing. To piece together all the parts and recreate ourselves in a semblance of what is needed to be whole.

Epistemology, knowledge, and research are all parts of a comprehensive whole. Our learning takes place within the context of where we are situated. Although we may be missing some of the pieces it prompts us to explore and relocate ourselves, maintaining the context of the whole of our knowing, to be respectful of each other and honour our diversity as human beings to celebrate our cultural differences that together make up the whole of humankind - towards an appreciation for the power, strength and beauty inherent to ourselves towards balance and harmony and health and wellness.

I'm here. I pick them up with my needle gently, glass beads one by one, onto my thread patiently piercing moosehide skin sewing, fingertips warmed glowing firelight, vibrant colour swirl pattern mosaic, wild flower, Metis, I stay.

In Between

In between, a place suspended where darkness meets day, a space forever spun, awakening each morn at dawn, at the meeting place of rising sun. Awakening.

A woman's voice, welling from deep inside. Emerging, rising high. Meeting air, to swirl and wisp, swell. Strengthening harmony, to swirl and wisp around the space. Bringing us, upon the empty prairie, under clear blue sky. She is there, in her skin dress, fringes long and flowing, feet moving to drumsong, tall grasses, gracefully blowing in the wind. Clear voice rising, high. Strong and proud.

In between, a place suspended where day meets night, a space forever spun, closing each day at twilight, at the meeting place of diminishing sun. Awakening.

Joining, rising, them and us, for all, to honour and recognize, our place and space, our joy and pain, struggle, triumph, survival, preparation, perseverance. We celebrate and honour our grandmothers and grandfathers.

To Learn at the Big School

Aaaah, the pool is lined with spring, summer and autumn leaves, nurtured by the roots of trees, and remains, water, cradled and nurtured by earth.

It is the teachers and the teachings that are absent in the classrooms of the university, and a healing we each seek and need.

To Entry of the Circle Leading to a Pathway of Assumptions

And so we return to the beginning of our walk together. We have shared much during our talk, visiting with many people, in many places and different spaces. The intent of our walk upon the pathway was to share in the spirit of recognition and mutual respect towards understanding. Now it is time to let go of my hand, to become, each to be, to feel the sunshine and listen to wind and water, at the river shoreline.

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Appendix One

Beaufort/Delta Fieldwork Program Summary

Following is an overview of events that took place over a two year period from 1997 to 1999 in the Beaufort/Delta region. A Fieldwork Program was initiated as part of the community consultation process during self government negotiations in the region which saw Inuvialuit and Gwich'in community members in the role of Community Fieldworkers.

Fieldworker training began during a workshop held in Inuvik in September of 1997. Twenty-four Inuvialuit and Gwich'in fieldworkers from the eight communities of Inuvik, Aklavik, Tsiigehtchic, Fort McPherson, Tuktoyaktuk, Sachs Harbour, Paulatuk and Holman were in attendance. The intent of the workshop was to deliver a training program that would bring the Fieldworkers up to date on northern government, the status of self government negotiations and fieldwork survey methodologies. During the two-week workshop, Fieldworkers were introduced to material concerning the Government of Canada, provincial and territorial governments, municipal governments and community organizations, the Constitution Act 1982 and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, parliamentary systems, procedures and law making authorities, division of powers, fiduciary responsibility, the inherent right to self government of Aboriginal Canadians, Inuvialuit and Gwich'in land claims agreements, the status of Beaufort/Delta self government negotiations, and, proposed governing structures for a combined Inuvialuit/Gwich'in/Public system of government. Inuvialuit and Gwich'in negotiators and leadership visited the workshop to discuss their respective roles in the self government negotiations process.

Following a review of the foregoing information, and under the guidance of the negotiators, Fieldworkers participated in the design of a survey concerning the status of negotiations and proposed governing structures. The Fieldworkers considered it important to include a survey question concerning guaranteed representation for Inuvialuit and Gwich'in at the regional level of government given that regional representation, during past decades and prior to the signing of land claims, had often been by elected non-Inuvialuit and non-Gwich'in representatives. Participants considered it important for future generations to continue to be represented by Inuvialuit and Gwich'in at the regional level of government. Guaranteed representation is considered by the federal government to equate fifty percent of Council seats.

Not only did the Fieldworkers have to conduct a survey of residents concerning the status of negotiations, they also had to talk with residents concerning the inherent right of Aboriginal people to self government; the relationship of land claims to self government negotiations; the significance of the Canadian Constitution Act 1982 and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms; and, the preference of the Government of Canada that the inherent right be exercised within a public system of government; in addition to describing the proposed governing structures. The intent of the household survey was to talk to residents about self government and to ask people for feedback and comments concerning the proposed governing structures for self government. It was both a teaching and learning exercise.

Survey respondents would be required to express a preference to either keep the current system of government; to have separate Inuvialuit/Gwich'in governments; or to support the proposed combined Inuvialuit/Gwich'in/Public system of government. They would also be asked to identify whether a community or regional level of government should assume responsibility for the development, delivery, policy and law-making authority for programs and services relating to Language, Culture and Heritage Management; Child and Family Services, Social Services, Housing, Municipal Services, Economic Development and Tourism, Education, Health, Administration of Justice, and, Capital Projects.

The Fieldworkers returned to their communities and began surveying residents in their communities in mid-October. Although it was sometimes difficult to access residents give Inuvialuit and Gwich'in continued pursuit of land based activities during the winter months, Fieldworkers completed their work within a five month period by the end of February 1998. Upon completion of their work, they had surveyed 1,675 residents and visited 1,493 households of the approximate 2,000 households in the eight communities. Fieldworkers visited 904 Inuvialuit households, 475 Gwich'in households and 295 other residents who either non-Aboriginal or other Aboriginal people from elsewhere in Canada, or non-beneficiaries, neither of whom are beneficiaries to the respective Beaufort/Delta land claims.

Basic questions indicated seventy-nine percent of respondents were lifetime residents in the Beaufort/Delta region. Of those who were not lifetime residents, 12 percent were residents in the region for less that ten years, with 7 percent resident for ten to twenty-five years. A total of 18 percent of survey respondents are non-beneficiaries to the land claims (2 percent no response). Respondent ages indicated: 11 percent - 18-25 years of age; 46 percent - 26-40 years; 19 percent - 41-50 years; 14 percent - 51-65 years; and 9 percent - over sixty-five (1 percent no response). Since individuals over the age of 50 are recognized by Inuvialuit and Gwich'in political organizations and residents as Elders, a total of 23 percent of respondents are considered as "Elders." Fifty percent of respondents were male, and 48 percent were female (2 percent no response). Only 6 percent of respondents required Gwich'in or Inuvialuktun language translation (1 percent no response).[1]

Based on a total of 1,493 self government surveys, respondents indicated the following:

- 1,085 people expressed a preference for the proposed combined Inuvialuit/Gwich'in/ public system of self government (64 percent);
- 1,200 people agreed with the proposed community level governing structure (71 percent);
- 1,364 people agreed with the proposed regional level governing structure (81 percent);
- 1,389 people agreed with guaranteed representation of Inuvialuit and Gwich'in at the regional level of government (82 percent).[2]

In regards to the development, delivery, policy and law making authority for programs and services with self government, respondents indicated they preferred a community level of government to be responsible the program and service areas of: Language, Culture and Heritage Management, Child and Family Services, Social Services, Housing, Municipal Services, and, Economic Development and Tourism. People also preferred that both the community and regional levels of government share responsible for: Education, Health and, the Administration of Justice. They preferred the regional level of government to be primarily responsible for Capital Projects.[3]

Of the 904 Inuvialuit beneficiaries (54 percent of survey respondents), 64 percent preferred the combined Aboriginal/Public system of government approach, with 16 percent wanting to keep the current system, and 18 percent favoring a separate Aboriginal government. Of the 474 Gwich'in beneficiaries surveyed, (28 percent of the respondents); 63 percent agreed with the proposed combined system; 16 percent supported keeping the existing government; and 20 percent supporting separate Inuvialuit/Gwich'in governments. Of the 297 Non-beneficiaries surveyed, (18 percent of total respondents), being non-Aboriginal residents or Aboriginal people from elsewhere (3 percent of total respondents), 67 percent agreed with the proposed governing structures for self government through a combined Aboriginal/Public system; with only 7 percent supporting the concept of separate Aboriginal governments; and 21 percent wanting to maintain the existing public system of government.[4]

Approximately three quarters of Inuvialuit and Gwich'in respondents supported the community level of government. Over 80 percent supported the regional government. However, of the Non-beneficiaries only 44 percent expressed agreement with the proposed community level of government, with 71 percent preferring responsibility to remain with a regional level of government.

Fieldworkers documented 893 written comments from survey respondents for negotiators. Residents were informed their comments would be confidential. The four main issues identified as areas of concern from survey respondent comments were leadership; education and training; language and culture; and communication.

Fieldworkers who contributed to the successful completion of the regional survey include: Jim Martin, Deanna Larocque, Janine Gordon, Martha Bernard, Beverly Lennie, Shawn Julien (Inuvik); Jerome Gordon, Michelle Gruben (Aklavik); Maureen Clark, Fred Andre (Tsiigehtchic); James Andre, Kristine Firth, Lucy Kay (Fort McPherson); Marlene McLeod, Florence Nasogaluak, Charles Gruben, Marjorie Ovayuk (Tuktoyaktuk); Lucy Kudlak (Sachs Harbour); Ruby Ruben, Patrick Thrasher (Paulatuk); Robert Kuptana, Joyce Banksland, Marjorie Ovayuk (Holman). Office staff included Linda McDonald and TJ Scheiwiller.

Community Workshops

The Beaufort/Delta Self Government Office Negotiating team facilitated a series of self government workshops in each of the eight communities between January and March of 1998 to inform residents about self government, to identify community issues and access resident feedback concerning the status of negotiations. The workshops were attended by community residents, negotiators and resource people, and hosted with the assistance of the community Fieldworkers. The top community priority was identified as education and training. Other important community priorities identified by workshop participants included language, culture and heritage, housing utilities and infrastructure, community health and wellness, economic development, renewable and the environment, and, leadership, cooperation, and communication. Negotiators sought input from residents in the development of a mandate that would provide direction to negotiators in the areas of culture and language; control; resources and standards; and, the inherent right.

A regional workshop brought together active Community Justice Committees in Inuvik in March of 1998. The committees are based on the concept of community based justice and are responsible for the provision of alternative sentencing in lieu of the formal court system. The purpose of the workshop was to bring Inuvialuit and Gwich'in together with negotiators to determine community priorities in the area of the administration of justice. The administrative aspect of the justice system includes community based justice, corrections, policing, judicial appointments, courts, court workers, legal aid, and, justices of the peace.

In addition to the foregoing community consultation activities during 1997/98, the Beaufort/Delta Self Government office also facilitated public meetings and presentations to organizations, and held ongoing consultation with Beaufort/Delta leaders, public government representation, and community leadership.

Based on the results of the regional self government survey and community workshops and the expressed preference that new self government institutions be based on Inuvialuit and Gwich'in traditional ways, the Beaufort/Delta Self Government Office determined to undertake an exploration of the traditional ways of governing by Inuvialuit and Gwich'in.

Traditional Governance Community Fieldworker Research Project

The purpose of the traditional governance project was to learn about Inuvialuit and Gwich'in traditional ways of governing. The project assisted negotiators in learning about the past from Inuvialuit and Gwich'in Elders, to learn more about Inuvialuit and Gwich'in decision-making practices and traditional methods of governance, and, to assist in the identification of basic values and rules traditionally held and practiced by Inuvialuit and Gwich'in. It was hoped that Elders' knowledge and experiences would assist in the identification of laws, principles, values or beliefs that contributed to leadership and decision-making practices forming the basis for traditional ways of governing. Upon completion of the project, negotiators would work with Beaufort/Delta leadership and communities to merge Inuvialuit and Gwich'in methods of governance into community constitutions towards developing new governing structures for self government at the community level.

Community fieldworkers were hired to participate in the traditional governance community fieldwork project, one from each of the eight communities and two for the larger community of Inuvik. They were provided with office space in their communities, attended training workshops, served as representatives of self government, carried out research activities, and were also responsible for project administration, and, Inuvialuit and Gwich'in language translation. It was anticipated that communication of negotiation activities would be ongoing throughout the project.

Training took place once every three months for the duration of the project and included workshops focusing on the topics of Aboriginal self government, research issues and methods, community wellness, personal empowerment, Aboriginal leadership, and, communication skills. Research issues and methods reviewed traditional knowledge research, ethical conduct and interview techniques, family and community history research, critical analysis and synthesis of oral and written materials, report writing, workshop planning, coordination and facilitation, networking and communication skills, Aboriginal perspectives, culture and tradition, standard administrative procedures, and financial management. Traditional knowledge research topics included materials developed by the United Nations,[5] West Kitikmeot South Slave Study Society,[6] Dene Cultural Institute,[7] and Inuit Circumpolar Conference,[8] in consideration of ethical guidelines and conduct of research.[9] Examples of Aboriginal principles and values,[10] Traditional Dene Values and Principles,[11] and Aboriginal people's perspectives of their relationship to the land,[12] were reviewed.[13]

A community wellness workshop goals addressed the relationships of personal health and wellness, communication and professional development, and personal awareness concerning community wellness issues relating to substance abuse, gambling, anger and grieving issues and the relationship of these issues to individual, family and community health and wellness. A personal empowerment component explored choices and responsibility, planning and management of personal commitments and responsibilities, value and importance of personal integrity, responsibility and accountability, and role of empowering relationship within families towards empowerment within communities.

A workshop on Leadership in Aboriginal communities workshop considered leadership qualities and styles, group facilitation skills and learning techniques, traditional knowledge in comparison to western science, elements of the planning process, opportunity assessment models and individual leadership capacities.

The Dene Cultural Institute in Hay River and Nechi Health Promotions and Research Institute in Edmonton aided in workshop development and provided instruction to the community wellness, personal wellness and Aboriginal leadership components of the training. Outside agencies were utilized given an absence of expertise from an Aboriginal perspective in these subject areas within the Beaufort/Delta region.

Self government office staff participated in the development of a pilot community development training program in association with Aurora College in Inuvik. Personal and community well being were identified as a being important to self government during the self government survey. The experience of the Fieldwork Program identified wellness as a critical component to community development and, as a result, wellness was added as a component to the community development certificate course. All fieldworkers received educational credit for completion of their coursework towards the Community Development certificate program.

Fieldworkers met with community leadership, community Elder's committees, and spoke with youth at the schools prior to the formation of a Community Advisory Committee. The committees consisted of two Elders and two youths, preferably one male and one female for the respective age groups. Fieldworkers would request the committees to assist with the selection of Elders to be interviewed and would keep committee members informed concerning their progress.

Fieldworkers planned an initial visit with the Elder to talk with them about self government and the status of negotiations to prepare them for their interviews concerning their life experiences living in the Beaufort/Delta. Elders were asked if they would participate in the project and consent to an interview. They were advised they would be required to sign a consent form that stated that they understood the information they were sharing with the self government Fieldworker would be shared with others in the future. The Fieldworkers advised the Elders they would be interested in the following information relating to Inuvialuit and Gwich'in ways of living:

- Ancestry - Who were the Elders parents? Where were they born?
- Land use - Where and how did he or she grow up?
- Way of life - How did people live? What were the traditions people practiced?
- Education - Who were his or her teachers? How were children taught?
- Traditions, Values and Beliefs - What were their traditions? What were the values and beliefs they lived by?
- Laws and Rules - What rules did they live by? What were the laws and customs? How were laws kept? How were laws passed on? How were laws passed on? What happened when people broke laws?
- Leadership – Who were the leaders? What qualities did leaders have? Who made decisions in the community? How were decision made?
- Changes – What were some of the changes experienced during their lifetimes? When did the changes take place?
- Self Government – What can Inuvialuit and Gwich'in do to make self government work?

Fieldworkers talked about self government to the Elders and requested permission to conduct an interview. Interviews were tape recorded and the Elders paid an honorarium. Upon completion of the interview the fieldworker submitted interview materials to the self government office.

In 1998, approximately seven hundred Elders over fifty years of age were living in the eight communities, approximately four hundred were Inuvialuit and almost three hundred were Gwich'in. Elders over the age of fifty were selected to be interviewed. Elders to be interviewed were identified based on criteria that identified them as being individuals who had lived a greater portion of their lives on the land.

Fieldworkers who participated in the 1998/99 Traditional Governance Community Fieldwork Research project include: Deanna Larocque, Beverly Lennie (Inuvik); Jerome Gordon, Velma Dyck, Elizabeth Kunnizzie (Aklavik); Julie Ann Andre (Tsiigehtchic); James Andre (Fort McPherson); Florence Nasogaluak (Tuktoyaktuk); Lena Wolkie (Sachs Harbour); Chris Ruben (Paulatuk); and Robert Kuptana (Holman). The Office Manager was Linda McDonald. Self Government negotiation team members at the time included Bob Simpson, Chief Negotiator, Vince Teddy, Inuvialuit Negotiator, Charlie Furlong, Gwich'in Negotiator, Senior Analyst, Stephanie Irlbacher (Fox) and various legal counsel.

Two of the Fieldworkers did not work through to project completion. As a result, only eight short interviews were conducted in Aklavik. Historically, Aklavik was the central community the region, although many of the Elders now live in other communities.

Three of the Fieldworkers were fluent in the Inuvialuktun language with one Gwich'in Fieldworker understanding but not speaking the Gwich'in language, with the remaining speaking and understanding English only.

Translation was provided by individuals considered to be fluent in their language, and with the assistance of the Inuvialuit Cultural Centre in Tuktoyaktuk, and the Gwich'in Language Centre in Fort McPherson. Although three of the Fieldworkers, Florence Nasogaluak, Lena Wolkie and

Robert Kuptanta spoke fluent Invuvialuktun, other translators assisted with the translation of the Inuvialuktun oral cassette recordings including Frank Umaok, Sandy Adams, Lena Anikina, Irene Ruben, Agnes Kuptana, Jean Kagyut, Ruth Albert, Leonard Harry, and Maria Salamio. The Inuvialuit Cultural Centre in Tuktoyaktuk assisted Florence Nasogaluak in the hiring of translators to translate the taped Inuvialuktun interviews. Gwich'in translation during the Elder interviews or of the oral cassette recordings was provided by Bertha Francis and Lucy Wilson of the Gwich'in Language Centre in Fort McPherson.

A total of one 153 Elders were interviewed by Fieldworkers during the traditional governance research project, including 58 Gwich'in Elders[14] and 95 Inuvialuit Elders[15] were interviewed. The Elders ranged in age from 56 to 86 years of age[16] with three individuals between the ages of 45 and 50 years being included at the discretion of the Community Fieldworkers based on their lifestyles and knowledge of their culture and traditions.

Almost all of the Elders spoke either fluent Inuvialuktun or Gwich'in. Of all the Elders, only five spoke only English. Fourteen Inuvialuit Elders from Holman identified Inuvialuktun as being their only language, which suggests minimal fluency in English[17]. Others understood the language when spoken, however did not speak their language.

Completed project documentation of ninety-four oral cassette interview recordings, approximately 1,100 pages of transcribed documentation, and a draft project report that included transcribed interviews. Beaufort/Delta Self Government Office staff completed a project final report for use by negotiating parties and Beaufort/Delta regional and community organizations.

The basic principles of traditional governance were that both the Inuvialuit and Gwich'in people were autonomous and self-governing. Decisions were made through a collective consensual decision-making process at both the community and regional levels. The people knew no laws as we know them today. Rules of behavior were taught by Elders and parents. Each individual was educated to make a contribution to the community. The guiding principles of traditional governance were freedom, respect, sharing and caring, independence, consensus and with all contributing to the maintenance of balance and harmony of the people.

In addition to the Elder interviews, five of the eight Fieldworkers coordinated and facilitated an Elder/Youth Gathering in their communities. The gatherings were welcomed by the Elders and considered a success in the communities because they served to bring Elders and Youth together so Elders could share their traditional knowledge with Youth. At the end of the project, a regional gathering was held at Aklavik for Elders and Youth to come together and discuss self government and traditional ways of living. Several of the Fieldworkers successfully completed their family genealogies and a historical chronology of events for their communities.

Approximately forty-five community organizations in the Beaufort/Delta region interacted with the Fieldworkers. In addition, another fifty individuals contributed to or participated in the project.

Fieldwork Program limitations and constraints related to a number of sociopolitical and cultural issues including human resources; education; training; administrative support; community health and wellness; communication; language; project expectations; and, alternative perspectives and ways of doing things.

Project constraints and limitations related to a shortage of human resources. Many people in the communities serve several functions at once. Time and energy, interest and rewards necessitate individuals to alternate their involvement in community activities. It proved difficult to access individuals to work as Fieldworkers. Fieldworker training necessitated the Fieldworkers travel away from home to Inuvik for a three week period every three months which placed a stressor on their families.

The fieldworkers level of formal education posed a problem in meeting the demands of office administration and communication through written materials. Most preferred oral communication.

Several were fluent indigenous language speakers, with English as their second language. Alternative modes of communication were employed simultaneously in an attempt to meet the needs of the Fieldworkers at the same time. The majority of the Fieldworkers were not familiar with standardized administrative procedures. Only one Fieldworker had adequate computer skills. In addition, there was an ongoing shortage of available qualified individuals with administrative skills to provide office support in Inuvik.

Given an absence of formal education, it was difficult and frustrating to adequately communicate the status of negotiations and related information concerning sociopolitical and legal structures and process. All materials had to be translated into plain language. Fieldworkers preferred learning through group exercises and direct experience. Time constraints necessitate covering a great deal of material in a short period of time. This proved frustrating for the fieldworkers. There was a lack of curriculum materials specific to Aboriginal people, land claims and to Inuvialuit and Gwich'in. Efforts were made to incorporate an Aboriginal perspective through the use of teaching materials and by utilizing Aboriginal instructors. In the second year of training, films produced by Aboriginal people and dealing with Aboriginal community issues were used, however the Fieldworkers considered them to be of little relevance to their experience in the North. Fieldworkers stated a preference to learn from Aboriginal instructors.

There was minimal administrative support provided, both during the self government survey and during the traditional governance project. The Fieldwork Program and associated projects generated a high volume of administrative tasks.

The interpretation and translation of both English and the Inuvialuit and Gwich'in languages became a problematic issue. Difficulties arose relating to the translation and interpretation of information from the English language to the Inuvialuktun and Gwich'in languages. There were English terms and concepts that could not be translated. Little work has been done in the translation of political legal terminology from English into either Inuvialuktun or Gwich'in. For example, fluent speakers were not familiar with equivalent translations for words communicating the meaning of the term 'programs and services.' This allows that there is terminology and concepts that are or may not be translatable from the indigenous languages into English. While the colonial experts participating in the negotiations process are familiar with the concepts and terminology of negotiations, many residents experienced difficulty understanding the political and legal terminology commonly used during self government negotiations discussions.

Language proved to be a barrier for Fieldworker's who spoke only English since the Elders prefer to speak their own languages. Although translator/interpreters were accessed when necessary, many of the translators had not received appropriate training to act as translator/interpreter. Although oftentimes, those who do receive formal training, have been trained using western scientific linguistic approach where meaning is lost when words are translated literally, rather than descriptively.

Difficulties were experienced relating to consistency and knowledge base of either the speaker or translator, in either or both of the indigenous languages, and, in sharing the same terminology or understanding of the concepts within the language. The Elder's English translation is dependent upon his or her fluency in the English language. They reduce the complex into translatable English concepts to aid in our understanding just as we reduce the complex to aid in their understanding of what we are trying to tell them in English.

The structure of indigenous languages differs from that of the English language. Sentence structure of indigenous languages is often the reverse of English sentence structure, being chronological and linear. In addition, the English language is noun oriented, with indigenous languages being verb oriented. This requires the translation of nouns into verbs and verbs into nouns.

The final translation is dependent upon the level of fluency of the indigenous language speaker; the level of fluency of the translator/interpreter in both the indigenous language and in the English language. Just as their levels of language fluency and glossaries of language in English, there are also levels of indigenous language.

There is an additional consideration, relating to perceptual hierarchy whereby we may perceive the words as being grammatically incorrect, in that the speaker's knowledge base is not equivalent to English language structural and grammatical norms. The foregoing discussion concerning indigenous language translation and interpretation must be kept in mind by the reader with the understanding that this process causes inherent structure and meaning to flatten and dissipate into a fragmented linear compartmentalized sequential discourse causing language distortion.

Equipment used for translating and interpreting was not available in the region and was only accessible at a prohibitive cost from Yellowknife. Simultaneous translation equipment during public gatherings was not available to Elders in the region at the time.

Both alcohol consumption and gambling are considered as socially acceptable activities in the region. It was considered inappropriate to require Fieldworkers to abstain from alcohol and drug use while working on the project. Although it was stressed that Fieldworkers possess a high degree of personal health and wellness, these issues impacted upon the project on several occasions.

Communication amongst the Fieldworkers proved to be problematic. Fieldworkers preferred ongoing interaction with one another. Many felt isolated and had difficulty maintaining their motivation when returning home to work independently in their communities. It was sometimes difficult for them to access community residents who were often away from the community either on business or out on the land pursuing traditional activities. Leadership in the Beaufort/Delta region is structured hierarchically similar to governing institutions. Community leaders felt more comfortable interacting with negotiators. Of the eight communities, only Inuvik had Internet and e-mail capabilities, which necessitated that fieldworker communication take place either during workshops, through written materials via fax, or over the telephone. Without exception, all preferred verbal communication.

There were high expectations of the Fieldwork Program. Fieldworkers were expected to communicate the ongoing status of self government negotiations to community residents during both the self government survey and the traditional governance project. Given the focus on Elders in the second year of the Fieldwork Program, Fieldworkers failed to meet expectations in communicating the status of negotiations to residents. Fieldworkers were expected to serve as representatives of the self government office. At times, this caused a conflict when individual opinions differed with those of the negotiators.

The project timeline was ambitious due to negotiations timelines. More time would have generated a higher quality of interaction and yielded greater results.

The greatest project limitation was working with Aboriginal people functioning within the constraints of an institutional process. Flexibility and ingenuity were key characteristics of the Fieldwork Program. Time and attention were taken to determine the best way of doing things both with the fieldworkers and in the communities. Often the best way of doing things did not fall within the parameters of the anticipated right way of doing things. Learning how to overcome barriers and allow a process to successfully function within an institutional framework proved to be the greatest challenge.

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[14] Residing in the communities of Inuvik, Aklavik, Tsiigehtchic and Fort McPherson Inuvik.

[15] Residing in communities of Inuvik, Aklavik, Tuktoyaktuk, Paulatuk, Sachs Harbour and Holman.

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[16] Elder Age Profile : 14 Elders 80 - 86 years born 1913 and 1919; 41 Elders 70-79 years born 1919 - 1929; 61 Elders 60-69 years born 1929 - 1939; 29 Elders 50-59 years born 1939-1949; and 3 Elders under 50 years born after 1945. The ages of five Elders were unknown.

[17] Beaufort/Delta Self Government Office. (1999) Traditional Governance Community Fieldwork Research. Draft Report. Prepared by Lois Edge. Inuvik, N.W.T.